Whisperings of the Caribbean

Joseph J. Williams, S.J.

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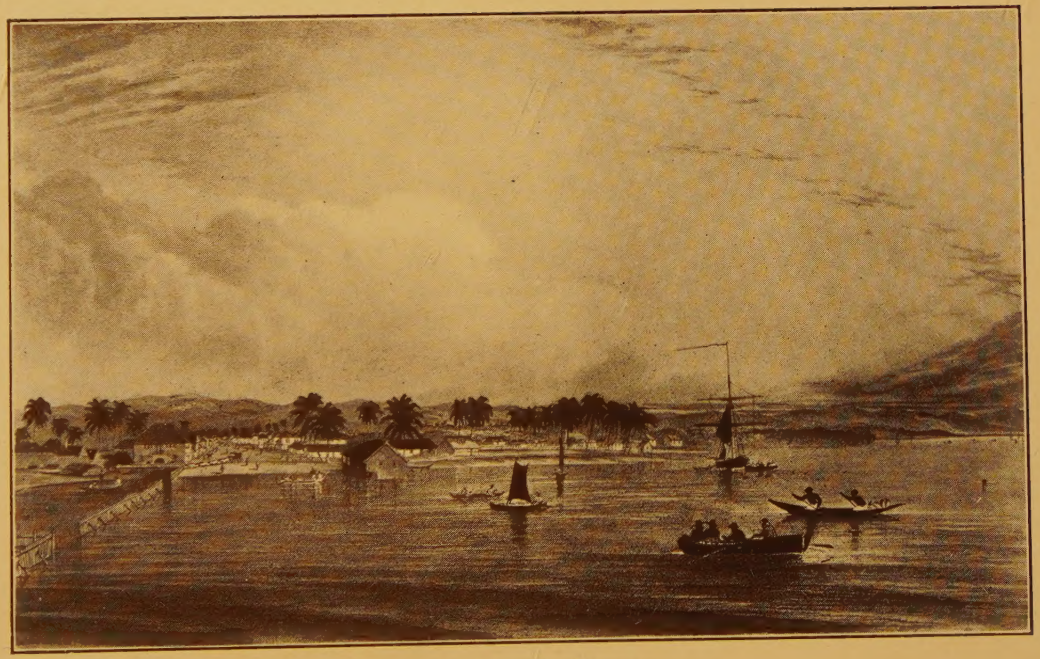


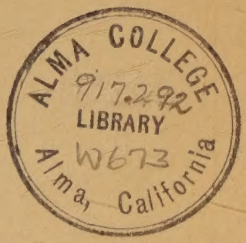
Savanah La Mar
Restoration after the Hurricane of 1780

WHISPERINGS OF THE CARIBBEAN

REFLECTIONS OF A MISSIONARY

BY

Rev. JOSEPH J. WILLIAMS, S.J.



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✠ PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES
Archbishop of New York

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WHISPERINGS OF THE CARIBBEAN

CHAPTER I

BUCCANEERS

"THE low coast of Jamaica," writes Filson Young, "hazy and blue at first, but afterwards warming into a golden belt crowned by the paler and deeper greens of the foliage, was sighted first by Columbus on Sunday, May 4th (1494); and he anchored the next day in the beautiful harbour of Saint Anne, to which he gave the name of Santa Gloria. To the island itself he gave the name of Santiago; which, however, has never displaced its native name of Jamaica. The dim blue mountains and clumps of lofty trees about the bay were wonderful even to Columbus, whose eyes must by this time have been growing accustomed to the beauty of the West Indies, and he lost

his heart to Jamaica from the first moment that his eyes rested on its green and golden shores. Perhaps he was by this time a little out of conceit with Hayti; but, be that as it may, he retracted all the superlatives he had ever used for the other lands of his discovery, and bestowed them in his heart upon Jamaica." [1]

To one approaching Jamaica for the first time, these words of seemingly extravagant praise are free from any tinge of exaggeration. The missionary, too, lost his heart as he drew near the scene of his future labors, when like Columbus he beheld the cloud-capped mountain-peaks and soul-raising splendor bestowed by God on this Gem of the Antilles, as Jamaica is so aptly called. He had sailed from New York on one of the coldest days of winter, and these fifteen hundred miles had brought him to the warmth and blazing beauty of the tropics.

For hours the steamer had held its course along the shore of the island, rounding Point Morant, then steering westerly to find its way among the keys and coral reefs that leave deep channels through their midst. The mountains, rising almost sheer from the ocean depths, not in great ranges, but a hopeless jumble of crags and peaks, crowned by

[1] Filson Young, Christopher Columbus and the New World of His Discovery. London: 1906, Vol. II, p. 10.

Blue Mountain, towering over all the rest to a height of over seven thousand feet, held the eye and raised the mind to God, bespeaking as they did the wisdom and surpassing majesty of Him, who could draw order and beauty out of the mad chaos of subterranean upheavals that had cast up these monuments to His creative power. The tourist is told, that, when Columbus reported his discovery of Jamaica at the court of Spain, on being asked what the island was really like, he took up a sheet of parchment and, crumpling it tightly in his hands, cast it upon the table with the remark: "That is Jamaica."*

Throughout the day, the flaming sun of the tropics had been drawing moisture from the restless sea, and as the air became saturated with water vapor, it was swept by the trade winds against the mountain-peaks, and where but a moment previous had been a blaze of sunshine and color, the missionary as he stood leaning against the vessel's rail, beheld gigantic masses of cumulus cloud capping each lofty summit; and even as he gazed in awe and admiration, the fleecy shape was hardened into dun. Then burst the torrential downpour,

* This pleasing story has probably little foundation in fact, and incidentally Jamaica is not the only island that lays claim to it.

that blotted out the topmost landscape from his view, while in the middle and nearer distance all was calm. Thin, silver threads dropped pendant from each storm-swept mountain-top. At least, they seemed but threads of light, when in reality they were roaring torrents sweeping down gorge and gully madly to lose themselves in the bosom of the deep. Then, almost as suddenly as the storm had begun, the clouds were swept away in wraithlike mists, and once again the sun shone out, and every peak stood forth in even greater splendor than before. Thus through the day had continued the struggle of the elements, sunshine and cloudburst alternately the victor, until the dying breeze at evening left the island in the brief glow of twilight.

As the last streamings of the sun, now set, faded towards the western horizon, and the stars appeared to bulge from the heavens with that clear brilliancy found only in the tropics, the land breeze sprang up, and freighted with the fragrance of tropical blooms, wafted to the traveler off-shore a perfume almost intoxicating in its sweetness. And he no longer wondered that with the advent of the Cromwellian soldiers in 1655, they had wholeheartedly endorsed the judgment of the Spaniards

by whom this Island had been styled "The Garden of the Indies." [2] With a sharp turn, the vessel changed its course to round Port Royal.

In the days when the freebooter or buccaneer was fact and not mere memory or idle dream, Port Royal was his rendezvous, and here in the heydey of his iniquity he squandered his ill-gotten wealth.

The story runs, that exiles from St. Christopher, some English, but French for the most part, took refuge in 1630, in the little island of Tortuga. Here they were shortly afterward joined by a number of the Dutch who had been driven from Santa Cruz. One and all, they supplied their present needs by hunting cattle along the plains of the neighboring island of San Domingo.

The native process of drying meat had consisted in fastening it in long strips upon a grating constructed of green branches, called by the Caribs "boucan," which was then placed some distance to leeward of a smudgy fire, that was fed with fat, hide trimmings and the general refuse of the carcass, so that the meat was not only dried and smoked at once, but acquired a peculiar appetizing

[2] Journal of Henry Whistler, May 16, 1655. (British Museum, Sloane MS. 3926)-Cfr. The Narrative of General Venables, edited by C. H. Firth, London: 1900, p. 169.

flavor. When thoroughly cured, it attained a bright red color, and might be kept for a long time without deteriorating. The refugees adopted this method of curing the flesh of the slaughtered cattle; and the natives, seeing white men so different from all others with whom they had come in contact making use of the boucan for their purpose, came to call them by the name which the French rendered as *boucanier* and the English adopted from them as "buccaneer." [3]

It was not long, before this band of adventurers found that their boucaned meat met with as ready a sale as did the hides of the cattle, and in barter with the vessels that visited their shores for the purpose of trade, they purchased not only clothing and the necessities of life, but also firearms and liquors in abundance.

Captain Hickeringill, writing in 1661, speaks of the Buccaneers, "who live by killing the wild beeves for their hides; and might grow rich by the trade, did not their lavish rioting in expence, at the neighbouring Tortudoes (Tortugas) exceed the hardship of their incomes. Their comfort is, they can never be broke whilst they have a dog and a gun; both

[3] John Esquemeling, The Buccaneers of America. London: 1893, Introduction.

which, are more industriously tended than themselves."[4]

From the very beginning, passions and lusts were given a free rein, and before long, these adventurers had formed themselves into a band of fearless marauders, who would not hesitate at any crime. Some writers claim that their exploits afield were induced by a descent upon their island of a Spanish armament; but men organized as they were, a law unto themselves, and their very livelihood gained by preying on their neighbors, needed no incentive to urge them on. They assumed a dress sufficiently uniform to mark them out, and especially designed, it would seem, to impress their victims with fear and trepidation. Their shirts, they dipped in blood to dye them red. Their trousers were of set purpose soiled and worn. A leather girdle around the waist supported a short sword and also served as a receptacle for the deadly knives the Dutch had brought with them. Stockingless, their raw hide boots left bare the knees, and before such a spectacle of savage and pitiless lust the strongest heart might well have quailed.[5]

Their most notorious leaders in their depreda-

[4] Edmund Hickeringill, Jamaica Viewed. London: 1705, p. 28.
[5] Jedidiah Morse, The American Universal Geography. Charlestown: 1819, p. 702.

tions on sea and land were respectively natives of Languedoc and Wales. Of Montbars, who was styled by the Spaniards "the Exterminator," [6] we need say nothing here. Henry Morgan, however, will claim more than a passing mention.

Dr. Browne, best known perhaps for his researches in the Natural History of Jamaica, observed in passing: "The government of England falling again into confusion upon the death of the vigilant Cromwell, the affairs of this colony (Jamaica) were much neglected; and on this account was frequently resorted to by the pirates of Tortuga, who were now grown a very formidable body: and the people here, at this time under little or no restraint, encouraged by the example of those, who had frequently brought in immense riches with impunity, soon gave in to the same methods; so that the island became another colony of pirates, which far exceeded the former both in number and resolution; and with whom they still continued in friendship, frequently uniting their forces upon occasion." [7]

In this respect, reference should be made here

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[6] Thomas Coke, A History of the West Indies. Liverpool: 1808, Vol. I, p. 274.

[7] Patrick Browne, M. D., Civil and Natural History of Jamaica. London: 1789, p. 4.

to John Davis, an Englishman born in Jamaica, whom Esquemeling praised for "rare prudence and valor," [8] understood of course from a pirate's viewpoint, and who quickly rose to the command of a fleet of seven or eight pirate ships, and was incidentally the leader of the expedition that sacked Saint Augustine, in Florida.[9]

It was from Jamaica, too, that the World-Rover, Dampier, made his start in piracy. He had come to the island on a commercial venture, but launched forth on a life of crime that was to circle the entire world, his field of activity covering both the Pacific and the Atlantic. In due course, he published a narrative of his exploits, in three successive volumes, and unblushingly dedicated his work to the "Right Honourable Charles Mountague, Esq.; President of the Royal Society, One of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, etc." Whether or not this Lord Commissioner of the Treasury was financially interested in the ventures, Dampier does not state.[10]

Sir Thomas Moddyford was Governor of Jamaica from 1664 to 1671. The Buccaneers, as we have

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[8] Esquemeling, *l.c.*, p. 74.
[9] A. Hyatt Verrill, The Real Story of the Pirate. New York: 1923, p. 65.
[10] William Dampier, A New Voyage Round the World. London: 1699, Introduction.

seen, had already grown to be a power to be reckoned with, and he showed himself their patron to such an extent that Port Royal became their haven and safe refuge whenever they were pressed too closely by the avenging Spaniard. Nay more, it was during his term of office that a pretense of legal sanction was given to their piracy. Charles II was King of England, and his brother the Duke of York, as Lord High Admiral of the Fleet, established at Port Royal a court of admiralty to license these free-booters as English privateers. So patent was the purpose of the act, that, as one historian remarks: "It was simply legalized piracy, and prevented unlicenced pirates, for none might murder or plunder 'but such as were authorized by powers from our dearest brother, the Duke of York.' "[11] In fact, it has been openly asserted that His Royal Highness no less than his dearest brother, the Duke of York, exacted and received a share in the booty of the Buccaneers.[12]

A. Hyatt Verrill gives this description of Port Royal in the heydey of its iniquity. "Here came the Brethren of the Main from far and near, bringing their treasures: chests of plate and bullion, doubloon, onzas, and castellanos; pieces of eight and

[11] W. J. Gardner, History of Jamaica. London: 1909, p. 58.
[12] Edward Long, History of Jamaica. London: 1774, Vol. I, p. 626.

Fort William Estate
From an Engraving Belonging to William Beckford (1778) Shortly before Its Destruction

Rebuilding

THE AUTHOR

Off for the "Bush"

louis d'or; altar-pieces ablaze with precious stones; bales of velvets and satins, of silks and brocades; casks of brandy and wines, tobacco and coffee; the cargo of many a scuttled ship and galleon; the booty from many a ravished and sacked town; the holy vessels of countless desecrated churches; vestments heavy with gold and silver thread, dragged from the bleeding bodies of butchered priests; jeweled trinkets torn from tortured shrieking women; the output of many a famous mine; aye, and many a weeping, hapless captive girl, many a groaning slave, until within Port Royal so vast an accumulation of riches was gathered together that it was celebrated far and near as the greatest center of wealth the world had ever known.

"And with its fame was coupled an even greater reputation for wickedness. Proud of the one as of the other, was Port Royal; its evils were never hidden, never denied; brazenly to the world it proclaimed itself the nearest thing to hell on earth that man could devise.

"Here came the swaggering, red-handed cutthroats to spend the gold they had won by robbery and murder, and ever the streets of Port Royal echoed to the drunken shouts and curses of the buccaneers. Sin in every form ruled; murder was

of hourly occurrence, and far and wide the depravity of Port Royal was a byword." [13]

With the treaty of peace with Spain in 1671, Moddyford's actions were formally disavowed by the Home Government, and great ado was made of bringing the Governor back to England in chains. He was ostentatiously imprisoned in the Tower, but his confinement was only a pretense, as four years later he was back in Jamaica as Chief Justice of the Colony.

Morgan, the Buccaneer, the reputed nephew of Col. Edward Morgan who had served as Deputy Governor of Jamaica in 1664,[14] was born about 1635 in Glamorganshire, Wales. It is said that in early youth he was kidnapped at the port of Bristol, and sold as a slave at Barbadoes. Esquemeling, later his partner in piracy, asserts that he had run away from home and shipped as an adventurer, only to be perfidiously sold by the ship's crew on their arrival at Barbadoes, as a bond servant.[15] Having served out his time, he found his way to Jamaica and soon established his reputation among the freebooters of the day. In 1661, he commanded a ship under Mansvelt, and after the death

[13] A. Hyatt Verrill, In the Wake of the Buccaneers. New York: 1923, p. 262.
[14] Philip Gosse, The Pirates' Who's Who. Boston: 1924, p. 223.
[15] Esquemeling, *l.c.*, p. 120.

of the latter, it was Morgan himself who was duly chosen by the Buccaneers as their chief and leader.

As early as 1668, Captain Morgan was commissioned by Sir Thomas Moddyford, on his own responsibility as Governor of Jamaica, to undertake an expedition into Cuba. While Governor of Barbadoes, Moddyford had been an intimate friend of the young man's uncle, the Col. Edward Morgan already referred to, whom he had described as "that honest privateer."[16] This may explain young Morgan's selection, and what was expected of him. That he lived up to expectations is clear, as the expedition was duly extended into a raid on the mainland, that was accompanied by indescribable enormities and excesses.[17] Spain and England were at peace at the time, so the Governor felt called upon to reprimand this breach of international law. This he proceeded to do by accompanying the verbal rebuke he administered to the daring pirate, with a new and bolder commission.

Then began a series of exploits and blood-curdling adventures that has formed the theme of many a penny-dreadful ever since.[18] As a consequence, Morgan drew down upon himself another

[16] Gosse, *l.c.*, p. 223.
[17] D. Justo Zaragoza, Piraterias y Agresiones des los Ingleses. Madrid: 1853, Introduccion.
[18] Piratas de la America, por el Doctor de Buena-Maison, Madrid: 1798, p. 100 *seq.*

reprimand from Moddyford, with the new penalty of assuming command of all the ships on the Jamaica station, to wage an unrelenting war against the Spaniards; with this naïve proviso, however, that his sole pay should be the booty that he could secure.

With the feigned disgrace of Moddyford in 1671, Morgan too was summoned home under arrest. Here he so far won the favor of the King, whose personal coffers he had replenished from his piracy, that his condign punishment took the form of knighthood at the King's own hands; and in December, 1674, he was forthwith sent back to Jamaica as Sir Henry Morgan, to act in the capacity of lieutenant-governor.

His first tenure of office was a brief one, as he was shortly superseded by John, Lord Vaughan, who bitterly complains of the drunken brawls and orgies at Port Royal, in which Morgan in person is the chief offender. In fact, Lord Vaughan with some spirit reports to the Government at home that Morgan made himself "so cheap at the port, drinking and gaming at the taverns," that he actually intended removing thither himself from Spanish Town, for the credit of the Island.[19]

Nevertheless, when Vaughan returned to England

[19] Frank Cundall, Historic Jamaica. London: 1915, p. 52.

in 1678, Morgan was again placed in charge of the colony for four months, until the arrival of the Earl of Carlisle. With the latter's retirement, we find our friend Sir Henry once more in the rôle of lieutenant-governor, from 1680 to 1682. The less said about this period, the better. Suffice it to remark, that on October 12, 1683, Morgan was definitely suspended from all office in Jamaica by Sir Thomas Lynch, the Governor at the time, and was subsequently summoned to England in disgrace.

Gardner, the historian, observes in passing; "When Sir Thomas Lynch died, Morgan was not in the island to resume the reins of power. The sturdy Buccaneer was in trouble. He had bought and improved an estate in Clarendon, which still bears his name. In the midst of the most delightful scenery, he possibly anticipated years of quiet rest. But the Spaniards demanded his arrest and imprisonment and it suited the government of the day to yield to their wish; but prison was insupportable after the free life of the ocean and the plantations, and he died soon after his arrival in England." [20]

However, in justice to all concerned, it should be noted that the disgrace of Morgan was not so much

[20] Gardner, *l.c.* p. 68.

due to the demand of Spain, which really carried little weight in England in matters of this sort, as to the fact that our bold Buccaneer was a past master of intrigue against each succeeding governor, with the hope, no doubt, of resuming office himself. Be this as it may, the schemes of Morgan were never fully frustrated. On July 18, 1688, through the influence of the Duke of Albermarle, he actually secured from the King his reappointment to the Council of Jamaica, but he lived little more than a month to enjoy this final triumph over his enemies.[21]

The following passage from the Journal of Captain Lawrence Wright, Commander of "H.M.S. Assistance," dated August 25, 1688, goes to prove that the bold Buccaneer, as was appropriate, spent his last hours in his beloved Jamaica and was there laid to rest. "This day about eleven hours noone Sir Henry Morgan dies, & the 26th. was brought over from Passage-fort to the King's house at Port Royall, from thence to the Church, & after a sermon was carried to the Pallisadoes & there buried. All the forts fired an equal number of guns, wee fired two & twenty & after wee & the DRAKE had fired, all the merchant men fired."[22] Morgan's

[21] Encyclopedia Britannica: Sir Henry Morgan.
[22] Gosse, i.e., p. 227.

will, we are also told, is in the Record Office at Spanishtown, the old capital of Jamaica.[23]

During the days of Morgan, then, Port Royal had become the acknowledged headquarters of all the Rovers of the Spanish Main, until it was regarded as the wealthiest and most depraved spot on earth.

Francis Hanson, in a short account of the Island, prefixed to the first edition of the *Laws of Jamaica,* published in 1683, while describing Port Royal, states: "This town for its bigness is very populous, and contains about 1000 houses, many of which are built with bricks, and beautiful with balconies, after the modern way of building in London; the streets are also regular, and kept very clean; there is also in it a fair church built with brick and stone, and handsomely finished within, and for the defence of the town and harbour, there are five forts strongly built with stone, on which are mounted 110 large guns, all kept in good order." [24] In the Preface to the same little volume, we are assured: "In Port Royal there is more plenty of running cash proportionally to the number of its inhabitants than is in London." [25]

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[23] *Idem.*

[24] The Laws of Jamaica, Passed by the Assembly, and Confirmed by His Majesty in Council, Feb. 23, 1683. London: 1683, To the Reader, p. 11.

[25] *Ibid.*, Preface, p. 33.

A subsequent chronicler reports of Port Royal: "It became very large and populous, containing above 1500 houses, and extending twelve miles in length upon the harbour, and yet the houses were as well rented as those in London." [26] A little exaggeration, it would seem, regarding its size, as even the circumference on the waterfront could scarcely have measured that extent unless the entire Palisadoes were included in the computation. However, by 1692, when Port Royal "had attained the height of its splendour," we are assured that the number of houses had increased to two thousand, and that the greater number of them "were of brick several stories in height, founded close to the very brink of the water." [27]

The city itself had been built at the end of a coral reef, facing the sea. It was alternately joined to the mainland by keys and bars, and cut off from it again by a sudden shifting of the sands. The substratum, then, that supported the weight of brick and masonry, being only of coral, was ill-suited to stand the strain of the earthquake that wrought such havoc on June 7, 1692, when the best part of the city was shaken from the reef, and

[26] Edmund Bohun, Cosmography in Four Books by Peter Heylyn. London: 1703, p. 1124.

[27] James Hakewill, A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica. London: 1825, Port Royal.

slid out into the deep water, with a loss of life estimated as high as 13,000 souls.[28] This figure, however, seems greatly overdrawn. We should probably be nearer the truth in setting the number of the lost in the neighborhood of three thousand.[29]

The Council was sitting at Port Royal at the time, and under date of June 20th they addressed themselves to the Lords of Trade and Plantation to this effect: "May it please Your Lordships on the seventh instant it pleased God to afflict this whole island with an earthquake, the dreadfulness whereof will sensible enough appear in acquainting Your Lordships, that in the space of two minutes all the churches, the dwelling houses and sugar works of the whole island were thrown down; two-thirds of Port Royal swallowed up by the sea, all its forts and fortifications demolished and a great part of its inhabitants miserably either knocked o'th' head or drowned. . . . Many of the guns of the fortifications are two fathoms under water, and are all in danger of being lost." [30]

It was of Port Royal, that De Quincey wrote, substituting, however, for purposes of euphony perhaps, the name of Savannah-la-Mar, a town, which

[28] J. Justamond, Reynal's East and West Indies. Dublin: 1779, Vol. III, p. 512.
[29] John Howison, European Colonies. London: 1834, Vol. II, p. 269.
[30] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 34.

though more than once a prey to inundations of the hurricane-swept sea, still stands on the ocean end of the broad Savannah at the western slope of the Island, a picturesque little group of buildings, frame-structures for the most part, nestling in the shade of countless stately palms. The author of the *Opium Eater* might seem himself under the weird influence of the drug, when he thus apostrophizes the haunt of Buccaneers: "God smote Savannah-la-Mar, and in one night, by earthquake, removed her, with all her towers standing and population sleeping, from the steadfast foundations of the shore to the coral floors of ocean. And God said—'Pompeii did I bury and conceal from men through seventeen centuries: this city I will bury, but not conceal. She shall be a monument to men of My mysterious anger, set in azure light through generations to come; for I will enshrine her in a crystal dome of My tropic seas.' This city, therefore, like a mighty galleon with all her apparel mounted, streamers flying, and tackling perfect, seems floating along the noiseless depths of ocean; and oftentimes in glassy calms, through the translucid atmosphere of water that now stretches like an air-woven awning above the silent encampment, mariners from every clime look down into her courts and terraces, count her gates and number the spires of her churches.

She is one ample cemetery, and has been for many a year; but in the mighty calms that breed for weeks over tropic latitudes, she fascinates the eye with a Fata-Morgana revelation, as of human life still subsisting in submarine asylums sacred from the storms that torment our upper air. Thither, lured by the loveliness of cerulean depths, by the peace of human dwellings privileged from molestation, by the gleam of marble altars sleeping in everlasting sanctity, oftentimes in dreams did I and the Dark Interpreter cleave the watery veil that divided us from her streets. We looked into the belfries, where the pendulous bells were waiting in vain for the summons which should awaken their marriage peals; together we touched the mighty organ-keys that sang no jubilates for the ear of Heaven, that sang no requiems for the ear of human sorrow; together we searched the silent nurseries, where the children were all asleep, and had been asleep through five generations. 'They are waiting for the heavenly dawn,' whispered the Interpreter to himself: 'and, when that comes, the bells and the organs will utter a jubilate repeated by the echoes of Paradise.' "[31]

But De Quincey is not alone in his perfervid

[31] De Quincey, Confessions of an English Opium Eater and Kindred Papers. Boston: 1882, p. 253.

phantasy of what lies buried at Port Royal Point. He has many imitators at the present day. Every visitor to Jamaica must hear the story of Port Royal's revelry, and moralize on God's punishment of the city of iniquity, a story always varying in details and often embellished by some ship's officer who from experience has learned to spin his yarn to good effect. What wonder, then, that knight-errants of the pen, who spend a frenzied month or so in seaport towns with short excursions to the interior, gathering material for the next "best-seller" that means to them their daily bread, should readily accept each word as truth, and give assurance, that, on clear days the sunken city is still visible through the translucent waters of the Caribbean; or, as another self-styled "roamer" would have us know, "said over the very spot where pirates once held their revels, and negro boatmen still assert that on stormy evenings one may hear the tolling of Port Royal's cathedral bell, lying fathoms deep beneath the waves." [32] But unfortunately, both for De Quincey and his less-gifted followers, there never was a cathedral in Port Royal, Old or New, and the bell of the only church that slid out into the deep was long since dredged from the channel

[32] Harry A. Frank, Roaming through the West Indies. New York: 1920, p. 404.

and, all battered and cracked, has been resting many a day in the Institute of Jamaica.[33] As regards the buildings beneath the sea, however, that is another story.

J. B. Moreton, having been a resident of Jamaica for five years, and writing a full century after the destruction of Port Royal, says of the submerged city: "Ships now sail over the old town, and anchor among the ruins of the houses." [34] This testimony is substantially verified by many independent and competent witnesses.

Frank Cundall, Secretary of the Jamaica Institute, and the outstanding authority concerning the Island and its history, quotes as follows from a little volume, published in 1855, by Robert Hill, *A Week at Port Royal.* "Admiral Sir Charles Hamilton related that in 1780 the submerged houses were plainly discernible between the town as it now stands and the usual anchorage of vessels of war. Bryan Edwards says, in 1793, the ruins were visible in clear weather from the boats which sailed over them; and Lieutenant B. Jeffrey, of the Royal Navy, states that when engaged in the surveys made between the years 1824 and 1835, he repeatedly traced sites of buildings where the depth of water

[33] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 56.
[34] J. B. Moreton, West India Custom and Manners. London: 1793, p. 38.

is from four to six fathoms. When there was little wind, he perceived traces of houses, especially distinct when he used the instrument called 'the diver's eye' let down below the ripple of the wave." [35]

As late as 1859, when the ruins, it would seem, were no longer visible from the surface, a diver, by name Jeremiah D. Murphy, visited the submerged city. He thus describes his experience. "I first went down on the remains of old Port Royal on the 29th of August, and found that what I had heard with regard to some of the buildings being seen when the water was clear was correct. I landed among the remains of ten or more houses, the walls of which were from three to ten feet above the sand." In other visits, he found the church and fort all covered with coral of the form known as brain stone. He adds: "I am of the opinion, from what I have seen of Old Port Royal, that many of the houses remained perfect after the earthquake, though sunk in the water, and that the sand has been thrown up, and the mud settled around and in them from time to time, until the largest buildings are covered over, so that the remains of the houses which I have seen may have been the top part of the highest buildings; which is apparently the case from the irregularity of the heights." [36]

[35] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 78. [36] The Falmouth Post, Oct. 7, 1859.

In the sixty and odd years since then, in all probability the last vestige of the submerged city has been buried deep in sand, or coated over with coral formations that have effectively incorporated it into the very structure of the reef itself. The passing glimpses, then, of sharp-eyed tourists who claim from time to time to have seen the tower of the church, must be classed with the mournful tolling of the cathedral bell on stormy nights.

The quarantine was passed. The vessel moved majestically toward the city across the Bay. The moon rose up and bathed the towering hills in floods of golden light, casting a purple shadow over the wooded slopes, with here and there a white-walled house standing out ghostlike amid the swaying palms. The missionary gazed off beyond the lights and shadows, out to the horizon of the hills. The story of buccaneer and sunken city faded from his mind. The spirit of Columbus was upon him. He had come as a discoverer in quest of souls. Where beyond those serried hills was to be his mission field? What fruit would meet his harvesting? Was this the paradise of which Columbus dreamed? Was this to be his threshold of eternity? He sank his head upon his arm, and in prayerful offering, made oblation of himself to God, a missionary to the Jamaica "bush."

CHAPTER II

EARTHQUAKES

AT THE western end of Kingston Harbor, the Apostles Battery once stood. Close by the spot is to-day a little cemetery, where many of Albion's naval heroes were laid to rest when the West Indies formed the scene of clashing fleets. In this remote, out-of-the-way nook, a simple brick tomb, covered with a marble slab, still attracts more than a passing notice. The inscription runs as follows: "Here lies the body of Lewis Galdy, Esquire, who departed this life at Port Royal, the 22nd. December, 1736, aged eighty. He was born at Montpellier in France, but left that country for his religion, and came to settle in this island, where he was swallowed up in the great earthquake in the year 1692, and by the providence of God was by another shock thrown into the sea, and miraculously saved by swimming, until a boat took him up. He lived many years after, in great reputation, be-

View of the Hope River
Near Dunsinane

KINGSTON EARTHQUAKE—1907
Harbor St.—Race Course—King St.

loved by all who knew him, and much lamented at his death."

The remarkable story of this famed Huguenot and his fortuitous escape must be included in every account of Port Royal and its earthquake. Each tourist hears it before he sets foot on land, and he is fairly certain to recount it in his first letter home. A man swallowed up by the yawning earth and then thrown forth again alive! Is there any foundation in fact for such a freak of nature? Not only does the incident seem well authenticated, at least in substance, but it is only a single instance of the many strange and inexplicable happenings that occurred at the destruction of the stronghold of the Buccaneers.

The Anglican minister of the place, an eye-witness of the truly terrible event, solemnly assures us: "Whole streets were swallowed up by the opening earth, and the houses and inhabitants went down together, some of them were driven up again by the sea, which arose in those breaches, and wonderfully escaped; some were swallowed up to the neck, and then the earth shut upon them, and squeezed them to death; and in that manner several were left buried with their heads above ground, and some heads the dogs have eaten, others are covered

with dust and earth by the people which yet remain in the place, to avoid the stench.[1]

Captain Crocket, writing from Port Royal three weeks after the event, corroborates this testimony, almost in the selfsame words. "Several people were swallowed up of the earth, when the sea breaking in before the earth could close, were washed up again and miraculously saved from perishing; others the earth received up to their necks, and then closed upon them and squeezed them to death; with their heads above the ground, many of which the dogs did eat; multitudes of people floating up and down, having no burial." [2]

A letter from another survivor, written September 20th, adds a weird detail. "The earth, when it opened and swallowed up people, they rose in other streets, some in the middle of the harbour, and yet saved." [3]

Finally, Sir Hans Sloane, the founder of the British Museum, who had left the island shortly before the earthquake, but subsequently collected much valuable information on the subject, which he has preserved in his *Philosophical Transactions*, records a graphic description of one who survived

[1] A full Account of the Late Dreadful Earthquake at Port Royal in Jamaica. Written in two Letters from the Minister of that Place. London: 1692.
[2] Cundall, Historic Jamaica, p. 136.
[3] Robert Renny, History of Jamaica. London: 1807, p. 222.

to tell the tale. In part it runs as follows: "On Tuesday, the 7th. of June, 1692, betwixt eleven and twelve at noon, I being at a tavern, we felt the house shake, and saw the bricks begin to rise in the floor, and at the same instant, heard one in the street cry, An Earthquake! Immediately we ran out of the house, where we saw all people with lifted-up hands, begging God's assistance. We continued running up the street, whilst on either side of us, we saw the houses some swallowed up, others thrown on heaps; the sand in the streets rise like the waves of the sea, lifting up all persons who stood upon it, and immediately dropping them down in pits; and at the same instant, a flood of water breaking in, and rolling those poor souls over and over; some catching hold of beams and rafters of houses; others were found in the sand, that appeared when the water was drained away, with their legs and arms out, we beholding this dismal sight. The small piece of ground whereon sixteen or eighteen of us stood, praised be to God, did not sink." [4]

In the case of Lewis Galdy, then, the explanation would seem to be, that, having sunk in a fissure of the earth, before the crevice actually closed

[4] Philosophical Transactions, Num. 209, p. 77, *seq.*—Cfr. Hans Sloane, M. D., A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica. London: 1707, Introduction, p. xlv.

again, the inrush of the sea, that must have surged up through every yawning chasm, hurled him forth and left him floating on the surface, as the shattered portion of the coral reef, with its superimposed mass of buildings, subsided beneath the maelstrom of the waters.

Scientists would have us know that "local earthquakes may originate in the outer-skin of the earth, whilst a large world-shaking earthquake takes its origin in the deeper part of the crust." They tell us of the "movement of subterranean rock-masses of enormous magnitude along a great thrust-plane, or series of such planes." They expatiate on how "from the focus many secondary faults and fractures proceed, some reaching to the surface of the ground." Some of them even dilate on the "relationship between earthquake frequency and the wandering of the earth's pole from its mean position," and add for our enlightenment, that "earthquakes seem to have been most frequent when the displacement of the pole has been comparatively great, or when the change in the direction has been marked." [5]

All this, without a doubt, is perfectly true. But the lesson is entirely lost on the simple mind of the Jamaican negro, to whom an earthquake is just a

[5] Encyclopedea Britannica, Earthquake.

trembling of the land, with ground-waves running like the surge at sea. He will tell you, that "Big Massa, Him mashed de house all down," because in his own guileless way, he sees God's providence in everything. Why should we wonder, then, that the frenzied mob can find in such calamities only the penalty of Sodom and Gomorrah, knowing as they do from sad experience for the most part, the innate sinfulness of poor weak human nature, that finds a peculiar urge in the enervating influence of the tropics, where no lotus is needed to cast a baleful spell.

To the missionary, in sympathy alike with scientific lore and the God-fearing tendency of the native mind, falls the task of reconciling these two divergent views. It becomes his part to restrain and calm the emotions of the children of the "bush," that reason may gain the ascendency over mere emotionalism. On him, too, devolves the task of drawing good out of evil. Remaining undisturbed himself, in every cataclysm or contingency, with Christlike zeal and energy, he must assert a leadership that will result in good for soul as well as body.

More than two centuries had passed away after Port Royal's dread disaster, when the world was startled and moved once more to sympathy by an-

other earthquake, that cost Jamaica a loss in life and property that can never be fully ascertained. The missionary had spent only a few weeks upon the island at the time. He had heard it said that earthquakes were a fairly common occurrence there, but that they did little damage as a rule. In fact, he had gathered the impression that the submergence of the pirates' rendezvous had been largely due to structural weakness in the coral reef, rather than to any destructive force of the upheaval of nature. Tourists are not alone in their false impressions! He realized this before the day was spent. But now, self-satisfied, he stood at the railway terminal, at Ewarton, awaiting the train that was to bear him down to Kingston.

He heard the noise before he felt the tremor of the earth. Standing in the open, his legs braced well apart, to keep from falling, this man who had come to devote his life as a missionary in the Jamaica "bush," felt all his scientific curiosity aroused, and a strange impulse stirred within him to secure whatever data the occasion might offer. He noted the direction from which the land-waves seemed to roll. He timed the period of the shock, and with note-book in hand calmly set down all that was taking place. He observed how the sound endured long after the earth was still again, and

finally faded away in a southeasterly direction toward the metropolis of the island.

Modern scientists reject the theory once advanced by Joseph Priestly in the eighteenth century, whereby he would connect earthquakes with electrical phenomena. However, to this poor amateur at scientific research, all unprejudiced as he was by previous delving into matters seismic, there was much that seemed akin at least to known phenomena of the electric discharge. The sensation was that of standing on the poles of a large electrical machine, without the cramping of the muscles. The sound itself was more of sputter than anything else; not unlike the crackling snap of a high-voltage current leaping across a considerable space. Then, too, as he noted later, the very crevices in the ground, with jagged edges and irregular course, reminded him of a huge shattered Leyden-jar, that had been overcharged and cracked in consequence.[6]

The weather conditions during the first two weeks of January in that fateful year, 1907, had been extraordinary. The thermometer had fallen to temperatures theretofore unrecorded in Jamaica. This cold spell gave way to sultry heat, that led more than one to remark that such climatic eccentricities could only precede some serious dis-

[6] The Messenger, 1907, p. 244, *seq.*

turbance, and that an earthquake might well be feared. This forecast was verified only too literally shortly after 3:30 on that Monday afternoon.[7]

What had been, a few minutes previously, in the interior of the island a single continuous vibration of eight seconds' duration, was felt in Kingston as a triple shock occupying nearly half a minute. From the harbor, the path of the earthquake was traced by the cloud of yellow dust and the toppling buildings. First noticed far out to the west of the city, the center of disturbance entered Jamaica's capital close by the railway station, swept rapidly along the line of Harbour Street, and then passed eastward by the Rock Fort Quarries. This was the line of greatest disturbance, but for many miles the earth heaved and trembled until everything of brick and masonry was reduced to heaps of rubbish. Buildings swayed like saplings in a storm, tottered for an instant, and then crashed down with a mighty roar, burying beneath them a writhing, squirming mass of humanity, hundreds of unfortunates who had a moment before heard a distant rumble that presaged danger, but which passed unheeded, as its import was not understood.

Mortar lost its adhesive power, and as massive walls became confused heaps of stone and brick,

[7] Woodstock Letters, Vol. XXXVI, p. 4, *seq.*

with rafters and girders all twisted in mad confusion, the very impact of falling masonry with the tortured earth still quivering in its agony, drove high into the air a dense and blinding cloud of tawny dust, that for a time obscured the sun, and at mid-afternoon added a fearsome darkness to the other terrors of the hour. Fire burst forth, and quickly swept the piles of ruins, licking along the dismantled walls, gaining fury at every instant of its course, and seizing on countless human beings as victims of its wrath. Many a writhing form, held fast in the débris, was licked up by the fiery breath. Many an unfortunate, utterly helpless to escape the onrush of the flame, may have been spared the realization of his awful fate by going mad from fear and terror.

On every side were strewn the wounded and the dying in their serried ranks. Hundreds on hundreds they lay there; men, women and even little babes. Scarcely a moment ago, all strong and full of life, they stood in health; now, already they are stiffening in death, or writhing in excruciating agony.

Straightway there burst forth a tortured, universal wail, or frenzied scream, that cannot be described. It made the hearer's blood run cold, and caused the heart to stifle its throbbings in the

human breast. A shrill, blood-curdling cry it was, like that of countless mad demoniacs; a cry such as may echo through the universe on that dread day when wheresoever a human body shall be found, there shall the eagles also be gathered together, and in that hour when all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty.

Truly, for stricken Kingston that was a day of judgment! Men, blinded and gasping for breath in the midst of the dense cloud of dust, with stifling smoke filling the lungs and scorching the membrane of the eyes, stumbled madly over one another as they aimlessly fled along the heaving streets that were fast becoming blocked with wreckage and littered with the dead and dying. The heart-rending cries and piteous pleading for help from those imprisoned in the débris for a time fell on ears deafened by the maddening scream of the frenzied populace and by the crash of tottering, crumbling walls. In that hour, every man felt in very truth that each slow-passing second might be his last on earth. What wonder, then, that the scoffer of yesterday lost heart in such a moment of universal terror! What wonder, too, that the voice of conscience often made itself felt, and

purse-proud worshipers of mammon, who through long lives had never darkened entrance to confessional, having come forth from what must have seemed to them the mouth of the infernal pit, at sight of a passing priest, sank down upon their knees, and then and there upon the public way secured their peace with God. Truly, the God of wrath and mercy draws good from all things!

The work of rescue was begun at once and continued with unabating zeal, while the fire swept fiercely northward toward a large square, or park, known as the Parade. More than once, when willing hands had all but freed a poor mangled wretch, were they driven from their work by the advancing flame, which seized its prey before the very eyes of the horrified onlookers, who could only bid a hasty word of farewell, and murmur a prayer for the poor doomed man's soul. With evening, the land breeze stayed the conflagration, turning it back upon its tracks, and giving the workers a breathing spell.

All through the night of horrors, the priests went wandering about the ruins of the city, penetrating to the darkest alleys, and everywhere dragging out from the wreckage dying wretches, who not unfrequently survived just long enough to hear the saving words of absolution. The operation of

grace was strange indeed! Many who had through life given bright examples of manly and uncompromising faith, were cut off in an instant. They had, it would seem, no need of sacraments! It was the poor and wayward souls, souls that had spurned those sacraments during long years, that lived just long enough to enable God's minister to set them on the narrow way that leads to life eternal.

Tuesday morning found the city desolate beyond description. All through the night crowds of Blacks, in a perfect frenzy of religious fervor, had paraded the main thoroughfares, singing hymns and crying aloud for mercy. Every few hours, fresh shocks were experienced, and at two o'clock in the morning a particularly severe tremor occurred. This added to the furor of the startled populace, and almost drove the Blacks to desperation, as their wails and cries burst forth with redoubled terror.

With the return of daylight every effort was made to remove the dead. Trenches were dug in the cemeteries for the identified bodies, while the countless who were unknown were buried in the open fields. The two-wheeled city dump-carts were called into requisition, and as they drove through the streets, the bodies were hastily thrown into them

in heaps. The mangled, half-charred remains of men, women and children, clad only in rags and burned tatters, were cast together without a sheet to hide them from view. All day long the work continued, but when night again closed in, the city still resembled a battlefield strewn with its ghastly dead. On the morrow, to prevent a pestilence, even this crude method of burial had to be abandoned, and the bodies of man and beast alike were piled up along the streets, and saturated with oil and turpentine.[8] A torch was then applied, and all through the succeeding night these burning corpses furnished the only illumination in stricken Kingston.

To one who stood upon a rising slope and gazed down on that gruesome spectacle, the sluggish cloud of brownish yellow smoke seemed like a funeral pall as it settled over the ruin heaps. The brighter spots beneath, each marking a ghastly pyre, carried his spirit back to the days of Christian martyrs, when the streets of Nero's Imperial City were lighted by human torches. To him thus wrapped in reverie, the cries and moans that piteously smote the ear were but the echo of suffering Christianity, and his soul was borne aloft above

[8] J. Hampton Moore, With Speaker Cannon Through The Tropics. Philadelphia: 1907, p. 217.

the turmoil and desolation of the scene, and in the starlit heavens he fancied angelic choirs welcoming each martyr-band as they trooped upward with palms in hand, palms freshly plucked amid the torture fires of Heathen Rome, to lay their lowly sacrifice, the very immolation of themselves, before the fair white throne of the Triune-God, in testimony to the Christ. But his dream is shattered. The Southern Cross shines not on Rome. The distant murmur of the waves is not the Tiber fretting at its banks. It is the Caribbean that moans her loss, and pounds and rages along the Palisades, as if she fain would wipe this ugly scene from off the wasted plain, and deep within her bosom engulf the remnants left by devastation's hand; even as she did of old put an end to the gross revels of the Buccaneers, by sweeping their proud city from its coral hold. No, this cannot be Rome! Nor are these pyres that light the city's street with baleful glare, the sacrificial altars of the saints. Poor souls! How few of these, our dead, had even a chance to think of God before they passed to judgment! Stricken of a sudden, confused by the weird upheaval of the ground, distracted by the groans of grinding rocks deep down within the tortured earth, the air itself a turmoil of débris, what chance had one to raise a penitent heart to God and seek

forgiveness in the hour of need? For most, it was an instant's change from life to death, a tottering step from the flesh to the spirit world, a passage into the dread hereafter without a guiding hand to lead the way.

The mountain breeze has freshened, and seaward sweep the cries and tearful moans of all the homeless ones, who in their thousands crowd each open space. The night air has grown colder, and it chills the watcher's blood. A shudder shakes his frame, and he passes his hand across his brow to banish if he may the haunting dread. But hark! That wail was from a little child. Yes, innocent one, you too must feel the pangs of hunger as they gnaw cruelly. You too must know the sorrows of this night. You too must shiver in the cold. For you, no less than we, must share the guilt of that primeval fall, and with us now must you too divide the curse that fell upon the entire human race, incurring with sin the wages meted out, which must mean death and countless other crushing evils.

It was while the dead were being hurried out to burial, that the missionary from the "bush" finally reached Kingston by way of the Spanishtown road. He had expected to find the roadway blocked by fugitives from the doomed city. Crowds there were, it is true, flocking along the roads, but almost

every face was turned toward the cloud of smoke that was rolling heavenward. By the wayside might be seen scattered here and there stolid figures squatting on the ground, chin resting between the hands, and eyes fixed with a look of blank despair, gazing unseeing into space. Entirely oblivious of all around them, they had dropped down the preceding night, footsore and weary, and utterly stunned by the terrible calamity that had overtaken them. These unfortunates, who were often the sole survivors of entire families, noted as little the bright rays of the morning sun as they had the dragging hours of the night of horror. But the family breakfast fire was nowhere to be seen; the family household goods were likewise wanting from the picture. In fact, no families were either flying from the city or camping by the roadside. And why was this? Because there was scarcely a family in Kingston, that was not seeking through the ruins for their nearest and dearest; because the family that had no one to bury and mourn for, had probably been completely obliterated.

As the missionary approached Kingston, he met the ghastly line of city carts, bearing their gruesome burden to the unmarked graves. One cart drove past. A single form was stretched there stiff in death. Even as he looked with reverential awe, he

saw upon the bare, protruding feet the grayish dust of the country highway, and he recognized in this the mark of the poor country peasant, who had but two days since departed from her mountain home to sell her little foodstuff in the city mart. He pictured her departure from the thatched hovel that she called "home," leaving behind her bright-eyed little ones, who were perhaps dependent on her care alone. The sun had dropped behind the overhanging crag that protected the humble garden from the mountain blast, and vague, fleeting shadows had quickly yielded to the shades of night. For in this land the twilight is but brief. Girding up her dress around the waist, so that it fell below the knee and little more, this daughter of the mountainside had raised upon her head her panier of yams, a load perhaps of ninety pounds or so, and then, with long and easy strides, she had started for the Kingston Market, some thirty miles away, to sell her produce for a trifling sum. Then would she make her necessary purchases, not losing a chance to haggle at the price, and the following night trudge back again to her mountain home, to till her garden for another week. Thus for many seasons had she toiled and labored without cease or interruption, but with this last night's lengthy journey, closed her earthly pilgrimage. Yesterday,

even as she was about to retrace her steps, the shattered building had caught her in its fall, and God had called away the patient, suffering spirit. The missionary brushed away a tear, and in his reverie pictured to himself the morrow of the accident high up in the mountain fastness. The little dusky forms gather around the hovel door, watching the opening in the bush that marks the path that leads through devious windings to the public way. She has never stayed away so long before. They had felt the tremor of the earth on yesterday, and had huddled close together in unfeigned terror. They had spent the night there weeping in their fear, till weary nature soothed them with her slumbers. And now this morning, as the hours pass away, and the sun climbs higher in the clear and cloudless sky, they vainly watch the opening in the bush. At length, grown weary and sore afraid, slowly they creep in single file adown the narrow path, to stand there by the public road and gaze in silence along the dusty thoroughfare, and wait, and wait, but all in vain, until the darkening shadows warn them that another day is spent. Then wearily up the path they climb again, worn from hunger, and faint from fear, to forage in the garden for themselves. And the harsh cry of the croaking lizard mocks the sorrow of the little orphans. One

by one the stars peep out in the moonless sky, and seem to start from out the heavens with very brilliancy, and the mountain breeze sighs mournfully through the fronded palms, and in turn each little weary head bows down with grief and sinks to rest within the cheerless hovel, that was but yesterday their peaceful home.

With an effort the missionary called back his wandering thoughts. His face was now set toward the city. He had a part to play, and he hastened to join his brother missionaries in their work of priestly charity.

Entering Kingston by North Street, his way led him by the General Hospital. Here was another terrible spectacle. A long line of injured were being carried through the gate. Wretched, mangled forms they were, with limbs crushed and disfigured faces. Wheel-barrows, hand-carts, boards had been pressed into service, or even more frequently, shutters wrested perhaps from the ruins of the very building that had crushed the sufferer in its fall. No complaining was heard. No murmurs were uttered. Not a single outcry of pain or anguish! A stoical spirit pervaded all. Even the bystanders seemed stunned. Silently, yet pitifully, they gazed into the face of each poor wretch who was carried past; gazed with an anxious, eager look, in quest of

the loved one who had disappeared and of whom they could find no trace.

During that same Tuesday morning, rumor had it that another shock would occur at noon. As the hour approached, the people became almost mad with excitement and terror. Every little while a minor tremor was felt, and, strange to say, almost at the time predicted, a shock of more than ordinary violence took place. Many fell on their knees in silent prayer, but the rude rabble now actually driven to desperation, once more gave forth that hideous blood-curdling scream of mad despair. All through the day, the parading Blacks had increased the intensity of their song, which rose now to a higher pitch of frenzy.

Truly, it was at moments such as this, that one was forced to appreciate the power of the Catholic Church, and realize the soothing and consoling influence she possesses over her confiding children. As the earth began to tremble, you could pick out almost every Catholic in the midst of the terror-crazed crowd. Silently they stood, nay, reverentially collected in thought, or with a sign of the cross, sinking on their knees, their hearts went up to God in earnest prayer. One little black fellow above all attracted the missionary's attention. His tense face was turned upward with a look of be-

seeching tenderness; his hands were tightly clasped upon his breast, and he was evidently utterly oblivious of all around. A lad of twelve he might have been, and a Catholic little more than a month or two. Yet the faith within that dusky little breast was strong, and the beholder could never forget the impression of that boy's face—its simple, pleading, yearning, almost pitiful supplication, without a muscle moving, wrapt in confident supplication of the God most high, whose power might command the very elements.

Toward evening, new rumors added fresh terrors to the hungry, weary, desponding multitude. It was reported that a tidal wave that night would sweep into the sea the remnants of the city; and it was added that the only place of safety would be the rising ground beyond the town. The apparent fulfilment of the morning's prophecy had aroused the credulity of the multitude, and an immense throng now broke into a mad rush for the zone of promised safety. The injured and the dying were ruthlessly dragged forth, and God alone knows the number who succumbed to the fatigues and terrors of that night. No one could withstand the wild torrent of humanity as it swept to the northward. No mind was open to reason in that hour. Grim determination was stamped on the desperate faces

of the frightened people, who struggled on, dragging their wounded along with them. And so the city was left deserted on Tuesday night, and one who was in position to make comparison remarked that a walk through Kingston then reminded him of a visit to Pompeii; the resemblance being perfect. There was the same vast, silent area of narrow deserted streets, with blocks of one-storied houses all roofless and in ruins, and emptied of everything. Deep fissures extended everywhere.

All through the night, the song of the thousands of Blacks that were gathered on the race course rose high in air, and beat unceasingly against the gates of Heaven; a prayer for mercy from the hearts of poor, deluded creatures.

With the return of dawn, the multitude flocked again into the city. Weary almost to exhaustion, excited even unto frenzy, the unfortunates straggled back to suffer for another day the pangs of hunger, yes, and for a time, the agony of thirst as well. The reservoirs were almost empty, and as a precaution against helplessness in case of future fires, the water supply was shut off until noon. The officials threw open to the hungry multitude whatever relief was at their disposal, but it was many days before anything like order could be restored.

And through all these days of wild confusion

and distress, one memory the missionary must ever keep with him—the touching fidelity of the serving class, who seemed at times unmindful of their own miseries in seeking food and trifling comforts for master or mistress in distress. At one of the convents, a black fellow was working at the rescue of some of the Sisters who had been caught beneath a fallen wall. Word was brought to him that his own child had been killed. Without a moment's hesitation, he continued at his task. His child had gone to Massa God. He could do nothing for her now. His duty was with the Sisters.

Around the residence of the missionaries, a number of black and coolie boys had been employed in domestic duties. With like fidelity they stood faithfully at their posts by day and night. But the brightest example of them all was little Alan, the porter, a lad of about fourteen years. Part brown and part coolie though he was, there dwelt within a spirit that made of him a martyr of duty. Of frail constitution, he was yet a child in many ways, but mature judgment rendered him invaluable in his position of porter. Immediately after the earthquake, he had been sent to see if his people had escaped. Satisfied on this point, he quickly hastened back to the ruins of the Residence, and during the succeeding days proved him-

self almost indispensable in directing the crowds of famished Jamaicans who daily flocked to the priests for help. But the little fellow's noble work was destined to be short-lived. One day, a howling mob of beggars gathered outside the barred gate while the Fathers were scattered about the city on their errands of mercy. This puny child alone held the mob in restraint, and prevented them from breaking in and looting the premises. But the effort was too much. Crushed and bruised, he sank down at his post, a ready victim and truly a martyr to duty. The strain brought on a violent attack of fever, that in Jamaica is called "black water fever." This augmented the internal injuries caused by the mob crushing him at the gate, and soon cut short the young life that gave such promise. The little hero died after two days of suffering. Strengthened by the reception of the sacraments, he quietly passed to his reward, leaving a void in the community, which will long cherish the remembrance of him who must be regarded as a martyr in their behalf.[9]

When Jamaica's earthquake-story, then, is told, not Lewis Galby but faithful little Alan Birbeck should be the one whose name is kept in fondest memory. The former truly survived an earthquake

[9] Woodstock Letters, Vol. XXXVI, p. 23.

through a freak of nature, but the latter through the conquest of poor weak human nature gave up his life in the fulfilment of his duty, amid the terrors of another quake. The former's grave with its monument and inscription leaves record that he was beloved in life. Over the mound where rests the little lad, rises a simple cross, that speaks of life through death, and gives assurance of heaven's eternal joys. The story of Galby has been carved upon the marble tablet. The heroic deed of Alan must remain deep graven on the Sacred Heart of the Master.

CHAPTER III

PEREZ THE PIONEER

IT WAS during his second voyage, that Columbus discovered Jamaica, sighting it first on Sunday, May 4, 1494. The historian Roselly de Lorgues tells us how the great Navigator, pushing on from the base established at Hispaniola, the present San Domingo, chose out three small vessels such as would be suitable for running up inlets and passing over shoal places. The little "Nina," a caravel of forty tons, that had, after the loss of the "Santa Maria," on Christmas Day, 1492, carried him safely back to Europe on the previous voyage, was naturally enough his first choice.

Carefully he selected his officers and crews for the expedition, and attached to his own ship, as spiritual guide and confidant, the devoted Franciscan, Father Juan Perez, who, while Prior of La Rabida, had played the host and patron to Columbus, and eventually proved himself God's instru-

ment in making possible the discovery of a continent.[1]

It may have been at the suggestion of this Friar, then, that before sailing from the port of Isabella on April 24th the name of the "Nina" was changed to "Santa Clara," in honor of the first daughter of the Seraphic Order. Be this as it may, it seems more than likely that when Columbus stood and gazed upon the lofty summits of the Jamaican mountains that hung as a purple cloud on the distant horizon, there at his side was his friend Juan Perez, clad in his Franciscan garb.

Washington Irving has remarked how the great Navigator was "filled with admiration, as he gradually drew near, at the beauty of its mountains, the majesty of its forests, the fertility of its valleys, and the great number of villages with which the whole face of the country was animated."[2] And the soul of Perez, the Franciscan, drank in not alone the beauty of the landscape, but his priestly spirit must have been filled with a Christlike longing and deep pity for these children of the "bush," who were like sheep without a shepherd.

The erstwhile "Nina," with her two consorts, the "San Juan" and the "Cordera," first cast anchor

[1] Roselly de Lorgues, Christophe Colomb. Paris: 1859, I, p. 469.
[2] Washington Irving, Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus. New York: 1865, Book VII, Chap. II.

in what we know to-day as St. Ann's Bay, which is situated about the center of the north shore of the Island. Moved deeply by the marvelous beauty of the surrounding landscape, Columbus named it Santa Gloria. In fact, it seemed to him that he had been granted a glimpse of paradise.

The following morning, anchor was weighed at daybreak, and the little flotilla moved slowly westward along the coast, in quest of some protected harbor where the vessels might be careened and caulked afresh. After a few leagues, a spot was found perfectly suitable for the purpose. It was a deep indentation in the coast line, almost a complete horseshoe in shape, that would give ample protection against wind and sea. The name of Puerto Bueno was bestowed upon it, but as Dry Harbour it is known at present.

Here after some opposition on the part of the native Arawaks, an amicable understanding was effected, and Columbus in the name of the Crown of Spain, took possession of the Island in the usual form.

Abstracts of the Diary kept by Columbus on his first voyage were subsequently made by Las Casas, and are still extant. Therein we read that before starting back for Europe on that first voyage, the Admiral "had learnt of another island behind that

of Juana (Cuba) toward the South, in which there was a still greater quantity of gold, and where it was found in grains of the size of a bean. . . . This first mentioned isle was called by the Indians Yamaye." [8] The name, variously spelt, that gradually assumed its present form Jamaica, meant aptly the land of springs, but Columbus proceeded to place this earthly paradise beneath the protection of St. James, the Patron of Spain, and the name of Santiago was forthwith bestowed upon it. A large cross was erected and duly blessed by Father Juan Perez, who thus became the first minister of religion who set foot and officiated on the soil of the Island of Jamaica.

Who, then, was this Juan Perez? What brought him to such an out-of-the-way corner of the world? How did this Franciscan Friar enter into the life of Columbus, the Discoverer? What part had he played in the great events that opened up to Europe the knowledge of an entire continent? That is our present story. But to understand it aright, it becomes necessary to review briefly the events that led up to it.

When the power of the Crescent was at its height in the South of Spain, astrology was characteristic

[8] Journal of First Voyage to America by Christopher Columbus. (Van Wyck Brooks). New York: 1924, p. 163.

of every Mohammedan seat of learning. Many a lofty eminence and promontory was forthwith crowned with observatories, to watch the course of the stars. On the brow of the hill overlooking the town of Palos, one of these astronomical towers was in due course established.

With the advance of the Christian arms, the Moors were gradually driven back, and at the beginning of the thirteenth century this site fell into the hands of the Knights Templar, who in turn ceded it to the Franciscan Order for the establishment of a monastery, which was consecrated under the title of Santa Maria de la Rabida. It took its name from the Arabian word for hermitage, since it had served its Saracen masters as a place of retreat and study.

A century and more passed away, while many a saintly Friar told his beads in the prayerful cloister of this convent, or standing there in the cupola that crowned the roof, leaned on the balustrade, and by day gazed out inquiringly to the far-distant horizon, or by night rapt in contemplation of God's wonders in the firmament, possibly employed the very instruments of science long used by the founders of La Rabida.

Thus it came to pass that many a scientific mind was formed in the peaceful retreat now consecrated

to Mary, and this Hermitage that had gratified the Moorish quest for knowledge, came to enlighten with true knowledge the simple God-fearing men who knew so well how to combine science with piety. One Friar at least established a reputation for learning far beyond the prescribed limits of his own Order. It was for Cosmography, as it was at that time called, that he was especially noted.

About the year 1484, there was elected as Guardian of this convent a servant of God whose zeal for the Master's glory and indefatigable effort were to prove the means of Providence in making possible the greatest event of the century.

Of a noble family, Juan Perez had at one time been accountant to the Sovereign of Castile. Hearing the call to leave all for Christ, he sought poverty and seclusion among the children of St. Francis, only to be summoned after his ordination, to become the confessor to Queen Isabella. Life at Court proved irksome in the extreme to one of so religious a turn of mind and, obtaining his release from office, he returned again to the holy peace of the cloister.

As Guardian at La Rabida, he had ample opportunity of satisfying his piety, and undisturbed he pursued his quest of knowledge until one day, it was in the month of January, 1485, a stranger

came knocking at the convent gate. It was a man of about fifty years, tall and erect, with a well-knit frame, but prematurely grey. A seafaring man he was, but travel-stained and weary. Yet, despite his poverty and evident destitution, he bore an air of distinction and masterful power. By the hand he led a boy of tender years, and deferentially he asked of the porter at the door a crust of bread and a little water for the lad. While the brother porter was satisfying the simple wants of the wayfarers, the Father Guardian chanced to pass, and moved at first perhaps by pity for the child, he stopped to question the stranger with fatherly solicitude.

Columbus, for the future navigator indeed it was, readily told to so sympathetic a listener his life-dream of discovery. He was on his way to leave his little son Diego, now about nine years of age, in the care of a relative, as the boy's mother was dead. Already repulsed at the Court of Portugal, he purposed now to seek help of the Sovereigns of Spain to carry out his plans. And as he told the tale of bitter disappointments, his sad, thoughtful eyes seemed to take fire, and in turn they kindled in the breast of the kindly Friar a like enthusiasm.

Juan Perez was a man of deep learning, but his

The Convent of La Rabida

Palos

Before Earthquake

Present Building

After Earthquake

HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL, KINGSTON

learning had in no wise retarded his progress in prayer. Neither had the spirit of prayer blunted his patriotism or stifled his zeal for the glory of Spain. He urged the stranger to bring in his little son, that both might find needed rest as well as refreshment in the monastery.

Thus began a friendship that endured through life, and as the bond of union was forged by zeal for God's honor no less than by personal attraction, so too it was a love of souls, even more than devotion to a worldly cause, that fired both breasts, and strengthened them for every trial and sacrifice.

During the succeeding days, Perez and his visitor spent long hours together, discussing the sphericity of the earth and the possibility of reaching the distant shores of India by sailing in a westerly direction over uncharted seas. They spoke of distances, they considered difficulties to be overcome, and with troubled brows conferred as to ways and means.

Awaiting a time that might be more propitious for furthering the cause before the Sovereigns of Spain, Juan Perez familiarized himself with every detail of the Navigator's plan, and Columbus on his part embraced the opportunity afforded him in this peaceful retreat among the holy, simple, yet learned men, to purify his soul in prayer and strengthen his spirit by divine contemplation.

And the lad, Diego, found a home. Kind instructors readily undertook the training of the child's mind, while the fatherly solicitude of Juan Perez himself nurtured the responsive soul in unaffected piety and love of God.

When at length the time seemed opportune, and Columbus took his departure from La Rabida, he bore with him as a gift from the devoted Prior a small sum of money to defray the expenses of the journey. Father Perez had also given him a letter that was sure to gain his admission to the Court and win for him staunch friends and supporters of his cause.

Moreover, as he set out, on one point at least his heart was now at rest. His motherless Diego had found a true friend and protector in the devoted Guardian of La Rabida, and he knew that his boy was safe in the keeping of the children of St. Francis. And for the seven years of bitter trials and disappointments that Columbus encountered, while his plans were everywhere obstructed, little Diego was developing strong in soul and body, under the personal care and guidance of Friar Juan Perez.

Finally, weary and discouraged at the obstacles he met with at every turn, and becoming convinced that he did but waste his time at the Court of

Spain, reluctant though he was to have to begin his quest anew, Columbus determined to look elsewhere for the means necessary to the carrying out of his project, and so he set his face toward France.

While on his way, he naturally turned aside to La Rabida, possibly merely to see his son after all these years of separation, but more probably through a desire to place Diego elsewhere, feeling no doubt that he should not longer impose upon the hospitality of the good Friars, especially since to Spain was to be denied the glory and distinction that he felt certain of winning for the nation under whose flag he should compass his bold discoveries.

How cordially Juan Perez must have welcomed Columbus as his dearest friend! But his heart was filled with consternation at the change of plans. Was his beloved Spain to lose the glory of the enterprise? It must not be! Accordingly, he prevailed upon the traveler, now so weary in body and tried in soul, to tarry for a time in the peace and calm of the cloister, that in prayer and holy contemplation he might restore his spiritual strength and revive again his sinking courage.

Doctor Barry, in his *Life of Columbus,* takes care to note: "Until then the father superior had accepted, through spontaneous sympathy and a pre-existing conviction, the project of Columbus.

He judged of it intuitively, and believed it without the influence of anybody else. Still, in remembering that at two congresses the Junta of cosmographers had rejected the idea of his guest, his moderation made him think that perhaps he was deceived, and that he had mistaken his desires for reasons, and his reasons for the truth itself; and that science, divested of illusions and enthusiasm, may falsify his dearest hopes. In order to remove these doubts, he determined to have other opinion besides his own in regard to the views of Columbus. Accordingly, he sent immediately to Palos, for the physician Garcia Hernandez, a mathematician well versed in cosmography. All the three conferred on the projected plan, the object of so many debates. The opinion of Hernandez was entirely conformable to that of the learned Franciscan. The project was deemed founded on truth, and its execution practicable." [4]

Doctor Barry further states: "It is wrongfully that modern historians, and among others Washington Irving, have mentioned that the mariner Martin Alonzo Pinzon was called to the convent for discussion. It is seen, by unquestionable documents, that Martin Alonzo Pinzon was then in

[4] J. J. Barry, M. D., Life of Christopher Columbus. Boston: 1869, Bk. I, Chap. V, Sect. IV.

Rome. Columbus had no connection with him until the commencement of July, 1492." The whole credit in the matter, then, is due to Father Juan Perez, and his single adviser was the physician Hernandez, who merely passed judgment on the soundness of the reasons advanced by Columbus, and confirmed the conclusion already formed in the mind of the Guardian of La Rabida.

Thus it came to pass that the humble Franciscan Friar who had fled from the pomp and splendor of the Court to seek the seclusion and peace of the cloister, now felt that the time of prayer and academic discussion was at an end. God's glory and the good of souls demanded that he should again exert the influence with the Queen which he had long since renounced. With all the assurance of his late office of confessor, he addressed himself by letter to his former penitent. In simple, trustful confidence, he urged that God's glory was at stake and the honor of Spain was in jeopardy. Yet, through it all, he displayed his devoted attachment to the Queen personally, as well as his unflinching patriotism and zeal for religion.

At the end of a fortnight, the messenger returned, bearing an appreciative answer from Queen Isabella. She thanked her former confessor for his devotion and loyalty, and she further bade him to

come at once, that he might in person advance the cause which he had so much at heart. She advised him, too, to encourage Columbus in his purpose, implying thereby that the victory was all but won.

It was late in the evening when the messenger reached La Rabida, and the royal summons disturbed the usual quiet decorum of the hour. While Father Perez made hasty preparations for his journey, Columbus himself went in quest of a mule, which he eventually borrowed from a nearby friend. Shortly before midnight, the devoted Prior set out on his dangerous journey, without a companion or guide, to pass through a land still infested by Moorish bands. God protected him on his way, and he arrived safely at the camp-city of Santa Fe, which had been constructed recently before the beleaguered capital of Granada.

Francesco Tarducci, relying on details given by the physician Garcia Hernandez in his deposition letter, thus describes the meeting between Isabella and the Prior of La Rabida: "The relation of Father Perez to the Queen still retained something of the confidential friendship of the confessor towards the penitent, although the good friar had long since resigned that office; and Isabella retained for him the respect which a truly religious person always feels

for the director of his conscience, especially when to the dignity of the office are joined such holiness of life and reputation for learning as Father Perez possessed. The good friar was, consequently, free to express his thoughts with the earnestness inspired by science, patriotism, and religion. He spoke of the profound knowledge of Columbus, his long experience in matters relating to the sea, of the study he had made of the proposed undertaking, and of the reasons which made its success not only probable, but certain. He discoursed enthusiastically of its advantages to Spain and of the glory it would cast on all generations to come; and his words seemed those of an inspired prophet, when he reminded her of the souls in those distant regions falling into perdition from ignorance of the faith, and with ardent fancy counted the conquests which the Church of Christ would make amongst the millions in darkness of idolatry." [5]

The Queen was convinced and had Columbus recalled, at the same time giving to Father Perez an order on her treasurer for the needed money that he might make a decent appearance at Court.

But even after the arrival of Columbus himself, additional difficulties arose regarding the terms and

[5] Francesco Tarducci, Life of Christopher Columbus, Translated by Henry F. Brownson. Detroit: 1890, Bk. I, Chap. XI, p. 105.

recompense should the expedition measure up to expectations. Briefly, Columbus demanded that he be immediately appointed "Admiral of the Ocean," i.e. over all the islands, seas and continents that he might discover. Secondly, the vice-royalty of all such discoveries; and, finally, a tenth part of the precious metals discovered within his admiralty. To the Sovereigns, all this seemed excessive, and was consequently refused. Accordingly, Columbus actually departed again from Cordova, in January, 1492, to seek from Charles VIII of France what Spain denied.

Father Perez, deeply pained, but not disheartened, immediately redoubled his efforts. It was probably at his solicitation that Luis de Santangel, who at the time was the receiver of ecclesiastical dues in Aragon,[6] sought and secured an audience with the Queen, to urge on her the acceptance of the terms set down by Columbus, before it was too late. During this interview, our humble Friar prostrated himself before the tabernacle in a nearby chapel, begging the Eucharistic Master, with tear-dimmed eyes, through the merits of His passion, and out of love for the countless souls whose eternal salvation was hanging in the balance, to enlighten the mind of Isabella and direct her will aright.

[6] De Lorgue, *l.c.* Vol. I, p. 211.

His prayer prevailed, and a messenger was despatched, who overtook Columbus and notified him that his terms had been accepted, and the last obstacle to the royal approval had been removed.

While it is strictly true that the Queen actually offered to pledge her jewels so as to raise the funds necessary for the undertaking, the sacrifice was never demanded of her. Santangel himself advanced the money that was requisite. In his official capacity as receiver of ecclesiastical dues, he was able to secure it from the Santa Hermanadad, so that it was in reality the Church itself, and not King Ferdinand, as is commonly supposed, who made possible the means for the first voyage of Columbus.[7]

Father Perez, his work at Court thus happily accomplished, hastened with joyful heart back to La Rabida, that with his brethren he might chant a solemn Te Deum of thanksgiving.

The work of fitting out the expedition now went forward, but new difficulties arose on every hand. The middle of May found Columbus back at La Rabida, where he made his residence, while he strove to hasten on the work of preparing the little vessels in the port of Palos.

[7] John Boyd Thacher, Christopher Columbus. His Life, His Work, His Remains. New York: 1903, Vol. I, p. 457, *seq.*

At the thought of such an adventure over unknown seas, the sailors openly revolted, and ship-owners exerted their utmost efforts to prevent its realization. Again it was Father Perez who smoothed away all obstacles. As Dr. Barry well observes: "The Franciscan, from the poorness of his living, and the coarseness of his garb, is naturally sympathetic with the people. He is loved, because he evidently loves. His modest familiarity attracts, while his devotedness attaches him. The Superior of La Rabida, moreover, enjoyed a personal consideration among seamen." [8] It was no other than Juan Perez, then, who finally prevailed on sailor and ship-owner alike to make the voyage, and he it was, who, on the eve of departure, met the little procession that came winding up the hill to the Monastery of La Rabida, to kneel and implore Our Lady's special protection on the voyage. He it was, again, who confessed and communicated the hardy mariners, and bade them Godspeed. He it was, finally, who stood there on the shore and, with hand uplifted, cast blessings after the receding ships until as tiny dots they stood out on the horizon, and only when the specks themselves had faded from before his straining eyes did he at length turn his steps back to the monastery, to

[8] Barry, *l.c.*, Bk. I, Chap. VI, Sect. IV.

spend long hours of watchful supplication before the Prisoner of the Tabernacle, the Master of wind and wave.

Gladly, even now, would he have accompanied his friend on the dangerous voyage over storm-swept seas, but the hour for this had not yet come. In his stead, according to Las Casas,[9] he sent his nephew, Rodrigo de Escobedo, who was eventually left as third in command at the little settlement of La Navidad, after the wreck of the "Santa Maria" on Christmas Day, and who shared the fate of all his companions, being massacred by the savages before the return of the Admiral on his second voyage. But this is anticipating the order of events.

It was on August 3, 1492, that the departure from Palos took place, and on March 15th following, the news spread like wildfire through the seaport town, that the little "Nina" was entering the harbor. An early messenger must have brought the glad tidings to La Rabida. Or, possibly, the good Father Prior himself may have been the first to spy the distant sail, as he stood in the balustraded observatory, where day by day he must have spent long, weary hours, gazing out over the restless sea, and watching each tiny speck of sail, with prayerful hopes that this might be his cherished

[9] Thacher, *l.c.*, I, p. 632.

friend returning with news of success. Certainly he was among the first to gather at the landing place, and he it was who clasped Columbus in warm embrace and with streaming eyes and thankful heart, bestowed God's blessing on the great discoverer of a Continent.

The following day, the entire crew of the little caravel, in fulfilment of a vow that they had made at sea, to go in pilgrimage to whatever church, consecrated to Our Lady, was nearest to the spot where the "Nina" should land, clad as shipwrecked mariners, bare-footed and in mean attire, came in procession with Columbus at their head, to the chapel of La Rabida. Thus in God's providence, Father Perez, who had celebrated the solemn Mass of impetration on the eve of the departure, now on the morrow of the return offered up the Holy Sacrifice of thanksgiving.

When Columbus, in course of time, set out upon his second voyage, sailing from Cadiz, September 25, 1493, with three large vessels and fourteen caravels, carrying all told about 1500 men, he took with him as Vicar Apostolic Bernado Boil, and twelve missionaries, to spread the light of faith among the Indians.

At the suggestion of the Queen, however, that he select some astronomer to lighten the burden of

scientific observations, Columbus naturally chose as his companion and associate his truest friend and benefactor, the devoted Prior of La Rabida. Well may Roselly de Lorgue cry out: "It was just that this Franciscan, who was the first to appreciate the mission of Columbus,—who welcomed him in lowliness, participated in his theory, had a presentiment of the New World, and who had prayed to God and supplicated the Queen for its discovery,—should be the first to celebrate the sacred mysteries in the immensities of the ocean, and the first to bless these unknown shores in the name of Christ the Redeemer. And to bring this about, a singular concurrence of circumstances operates in his favor. Without solicitation on his part, he is called by the Queen to the voyage. It is as a savant that he is a member of the expedition. It is by this title that he is on board the Admiral's ship, forms a part of the ship's officers, necessarily disembarks with them, to take every possession, and thus finds himself the first priest, the first religious, that enjoyed the happiness of planting the Cross in the new soil." [10]

Father Boil and his Religious were scattered among the other vessels of the fleet. Juan Perez

[10] De Lorgue, *l.c.*, I, p. 422.

was alone with the Admiral. It was but natural, then, that when Hispaniola was reached, on December 8th, the holy sacrifice of the Mass was offered for the first time in the New World by none other than the Prior of La Rabida.[11] This memorable event took place at Point Conception, named in honor of the day, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. The edifice was only a temporary structure, but it was the first church erected in America. Further, it seems quite certain that the Blessed Sacrament was preserved therein and Father Perez took spiritual charge of the district, establishing the first convent in the New World, which Columbus ordered to be made in what we now know as San Domingo.[12]

Little is known for certain about the remaining days of Father Juan Perez. As we have seen, De Lorgue asserts that he accompanied Columbus in all the adventures of the second voyage, and many infer from this that he returned to Europe with the great Navigator. It seems more probable, however, that he remained and died in the New World that he had helped discover. At all events, when the Admiral's son Diego was seeking legal means to recover his inherited rights, Dr. Garcia Hernandez

[11] Cardoso, Agiologio Lusitano, III, p. 40.
[12] Zephyrin Englehardt, O. F. M., in Catholic Encyclopedia. Juan Perez.

testified in 1513 that his old friend Father Juan Perez had already passed to his reward. This very testimony would seem to imply that Juan Perez remained in the West Indies and never returned to his peaceful convent at La Rabida, for if his days had been spent among the brethren there, what need of testimony from the Doctor that his friend was dead? [13]

We may well imagine that good Friar, then, after the first Mass at Point Conception, busying himself about the duties of his new office, establishing and organizing the work entrusted to his care. Four months and a half later, he again set sail aboard the ship of the Admiral, to bless the crosses which Columbus planted at every new spot to which he laid claim in the name of the Crown, to impress the natives with the solemnity of the act, and to render homage to the Crucified, and set the seal of faith on each land visited.[14]

After this solemn rite had been performed at Dry Harbour Bay on May 5, 1494, claiming the Land of Springs for the Crown of Spain and for the Cross of Christ, Columbus proceeded to careen his ships and spent three days in caulking them. The repairs completed, he set sail again, and slowly

[13] Thacher, *l.c.*, I, p. 432.
[14] Fortunatus Hubertus, Menologium S. Francisci. Historica Proloquia, p. 67.

cruised along the shore to the westward, lost in admiration of the marvelous scenery.

Washington Irving here remarks, how "the little squadron was continually surrounded by the canoes of the natives, who came off from every bay, and river, and headland, no longer manifesting hostility, but anxious to exchange anything they possessed for European trifles. After proceeding about twenty-four leagues, they approached the western extremity of the island, where the coast bending to the south, the wind became unfavorable for further progress along the shore. Being disappointed in the hopes of finding gold in Jamaica, and the breeze being fair for Cuba, Columbus determined to return thither, and not to leave it until he had explored its coast to a sufficient distance to determine the question, whether it were terra firma or an island. To the last place at which he touched in Jamaica, he gave the name of Gulf of Buentiempo, or Fair Weather, on account of the propitious wind which blew for Cuba. Just as he was about to sail, a young Indian came off to the ship, and begged the Spaniards would take him to their country. He was followed by his relatives and friends, who endeavoured by their most affecting supplications to dissuade him from his purpose.

For some time he was distracted between concern for the distress of his family, and an ardent desire to see the home of these wonderful strangers. Curiosity and the youthful propensity to rove, prevailed; he tore himself from the embraces of his friends, and, that he might not behold the tears of his sisters, hid himself in a secret part of the ship. Touched by this scene of natural affection, and pleased with the enterprising and confiding spirit of the youth, Columbus gave orders that he should be treated with special kindness." [15]

This passage has led the Chronicler of Jamaica to remark, when speaking of the Parish of St. James, "from this parish, from Cabo del Buen Tiempo, sailed with Columbus the first Jamaican who ever went to Europe—probably the first willing emigrant from the New World to the Old." [16] However, this honor might in a way be called in question. One at least of the Indians who had been carried back on the occasion of the first voyage, an Arawak from San Salvador, to whom the name Diego Colon had been given, remained attached to the Admiral to the end, and accompanied him freely as interpreter on his journeys, and was actually aboard ship when his brother

[15] Irving, *l.c.*, Bk. VII, Chap. II.
[16] Cundall, Historic Jamaica, p. 319.

Arawak from Jamaica joined company. True, a letter of Columbus to Don Raphael Sanchez, Treasurer of their Most Serene Highnesses, and dated March 14, 1493, clearly states, "On my arrival I took by force from the first island a few of the Indians, in order that we might become acquainted with one another's language, and to gain a knowledge of what their country contained." [17] But kindness soon won the affection and devotion of these children of the "bush," and the one named after the Admiral's brother, who was his sponsor in Baptism, became so personally attached to the Navigator, that he remained his faithful follower, and he would seem to have some claim to the distinction of being the "first willing immigrant from the New World to the Old."

In the autumn of the same year, 1494, Columbus again visited Jamaica, and passed along the entire southern coast, stopping daily, and the same friendly relations with the natives were everywhere manifest. In fact, it was only with the greatest tact that the Admiral was able to dissuade one proud Cacique, who wished to bring his entire family and retinue, and travel back to Spain with him. And all this while, the humble Franciscan

[17] Facsimile Reprint of the original Edition with English Translation. Albany: 1900, p. 8.

Friar, Juan Perez, must have found ample opportunity for priestly zeal and endless charity.

From this day, we can only conjecture as to the movements of our friend, Juan Perez. The trials and wrongs of Columbus now followed in rapid succession. From his next voyage, he is to return to Spain in chains; and on his fourth, he must remain an entire year marooned on the northern shore of Jamaica. The noble spirit broke under the repeated injustices, and he died at Valladolid, May 20, 1506.

His son Diego became heir not only to his titles, but also to his persecutions and wrongs. Determined to save something from the "Admiralty," he sent his follower Juan d'Esquivel to establish a colony in Jamaica. This was done in November, 1509. If good Friar Perez was living then, he might readily be expected to have joined the expedition. Diego, the uncle of the new Admiral, himself a priest at the time, certainly accompanied his nephew and namesake as far as Hispaniola. Did he go with D'Esquivel to Jamaica, to safeguard the interests of the family? That is a question as yet undetermined. Possibly both he and Juan Perez combined to begin the building of the church and monastery! But that is another story.

However, whether the Franciscan Juan Perez

ever returned to labor in Jamaica or not, his spirit endured, and the children of St. Francis early took up the work.

The first town established by D'Esquivel was near the present St. Ann's Bay, called by Columbus Santa Gloria. This foundation was named Sevilla Nueva, and its ruins marked a city of considerable size. It is more than probable, that the monastery founded there was a convent of the Franciscan Order. As a matter of fact, in August, 1522, two Friars, Juan de Tecto and Juan de Arevalo, came out to "visit the monks in the island." They were both Franciscans and as they "were to be accorded all facilities," it might appear that they had come for a canonical visitation.[18]

Four years later, Luis de la Torre, the "Supervisor of the smelting and marking of gold in the Island of Santiago," resigned his position, to "become a monk in the Franciscan Monastery at St. Domingo." [19] This is the earliest record of a religious vocation from the Isle of Springs.

In 1534, the town of Sevilla was abandoned, for reasons of health, the colony being transferred to a more salubrious location on the other side of the Island. The new site was called Villa de la Vega,

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[18] Frank Cundall, Jamaica Under the Spaniards. Kingston: 1919, p. 6.
[19] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 6.

but usually was referred to merely as La Vega.[20] It is the present Spanishtown, and it gave to Luis Columbus, the grandson of the Discoverer, in 1556, his title of Duke de la Vega.

Just when the convent was transferred from Sevilla, it is hard to say. Bridges, in his *Annals of Jamaica* would imply that it was some years subsequent to the transfer of the capital itself.[21]

In 1582, Francesco Marques de Villalobos, Abbot of Jamaica, refers to a Dominican Monastery in La Vega, but makes no reference to any Franciscan convent, but his successor in 1611, writes to the King: "There are two monasteries, one of St. Dominic and one of St. Francis, and at present three monks in each and among them two preachers." [22]

In April, 1644, an investigator reports, "a monastery of the order of St. Dominic with four monks and another of St. Francis with three live very poorly on alms." [23] Moreover, when in March, 1643, La Vega was captured by the English Captain Jackson, who assessed a heavy ransom on the inhabitants, we find it recorded by the invader himself: "It is beautiful with five or six stately churches

[20] Cundall, Jamaica Under the Spaniards, p. 11.
[21] Georges William Bridges, The Annals of Jamaica. London: 1828, Vol. I, p. 170.
[22] Cundall, *l.c.* pp. 16, 34. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

and one monastery of Franciscan Fryers."[24] While he exaggerated as to the number of churches and their condition, the Franciscan monastery was a reality. Finally, this monastery is mentioned again when the Island was eventually seized by the Cromwellian soldiers in the year 1655.[25]

Nor does the influence of the children of St. Francis end here. Father Benito, who was to become the first Vicar Apostolic of Jamaica, had been superior of a Franciscan convent in New Granada at the time of the rebellion there. Finding a temporary refuge in the Isle of Springs, after a short stay in Cuba, he took up active work in Jamaica, in 1821, and continued to labor there until his death thirty-four years later. For some time, in fact, he was the only priest on the island. It is recorded of him, that although by reason of his isolation and the absolute impossibility of community life, he had obtained from Rome his secularization in 1828, he ever maintained with scrupulous exactitude the pious customs and fasts of his Order, true to the inheritance left him by the Pioneer, who first exercised the priestly functions in Jamaica.[26]

Juan Perez, the scion of a noble family, Father

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[24] Cundall, Historic Jamaica, p. 86. [25] Hickeringill, *l.c.*, p. 21.
[26] Woodstock Letters, Vol. XXIII, p. 204.

Confessor to the Queen of Spain, Prior of the Convent of La Rabida, and God's instrument in making possible the discovery of the New World, ended his days in obscurity. His last years were unrecorded by his fellow men, and finally, buried God alone knows where, his mortal remains now rest in some unmarked grave. His bosom friend, Columbus, was not appreciated by his contemporaries. His most sacred rights were violated and his confidences were betrayed. The great Navigator had found in the humble Franciscan, however, a true and sympathetic friend, who came to the New World to share his trials and his dangers, and who was not separated from him in the bearing of the cross. In fact, all those wooden crosses with which they plotted out together the shores of the lands of their discovery, seem to have cast a shadow across their common path. Possibly it was the wrongs and injustices of Columbus, that hastened the end and wore out the generous, noble spirit of the lowly Friar. It may have been, in truth, the sight of the Admiral in chains, deported from his vice-royalty as a common malefactor, that caused the patient, affectionate heart of a true friend to break with bitter anguish.

Companions in the days of doubt and disappointment, companions in the brief hour of triumph and

the world's acclaim, companions still during the sufferings of a nation's ingratitude, harder to bear than the dangers of the storm-swept sea that they endured in common, Christopher Columbus and Juan Perez remained companion spirits unto death, and both await the hour of final triumph, when the wrongs of time will be righted by Eternal Justice, that once again together, they may share the glory of the Resurrection and the never-ending joys of the true paradise.

CHAPTER IV

MAROONED

ON MAY 9, 1502, Christopher Columbus, as Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies, sailed from Spain on his fourth and last voyage of discovery. His flotilla consisted of four little caravels, the "Capitana" as flagship, the "Santiago," the "Gallegro," and the "Viscaina." Of these, the largest was only of seventy tons, and the smallest was scarcely fifty.

The Admiral had with him his devoted brother Bartholomew, who, as Adelantado or Lieutenant-General of the Indies, had so loyally seconded his efforts on his former enterprises, and had shared with him the chains and humiliations that had closed the preceding voyage.

Don Diego, the youngest of the brothers, was missing from the expedition. Wearied by the petty jealousies that were unceasingly displayed on every hand by the haughty Dons against his family as

Genoese, his faith in earthly royalty shaken by the cunning duplicity and repeated injustices of King Ferdinand against his brothers and himself, disgusted too at all that the world could offer in matters temporal, his noble, upright soul had sought spiritual calm and rest in the peace of the sanctuary, his devotion and immolation of self to the King of kings had broken every earthly tie and raised his fealty to a higher plane. He had accepted the divine invitation to leave all, that with Christlike zeal he might labor and toil for souls alone. And in God's own good time, as a priest of God, he will one day set out for the Indies, that where his service of the King of Spain had been requited by chains and degradation, he may so obliterate himself in the cause of the Crucified, that even his presence there will be little more than recorded.[1]

Don Christopher must have sorely missed this gentle, unworldly brother, whom he was leaving behind in the well-earned peace of the atmosphere of prayer. He had long been prepared for the sacrifice, and had only urged its deferment for a time in view of the pressing need he had of his brother's help. As early as February 22, 1498, in establishing the right of succession in his majorat,

[1] A. G. Knight, Life of Christopher Columbus. New York: 1877, p. 187.

he mentions as a reason for bequeathing to Diego a lump sum in place of an annuity, that "he has the intention of becoming an Ecclesiastic,"[2] adding that the Church will make due provision for him.

It has even been asserted by some historians, that Don Diego became not only a priest but also a Religious. This last seems improbable, in virtue of his will, wherein he made his niece, Doña Maria, his heir, and bequeathed to her a substantial inheritance, which would not have been the case, had he been bound by the religious vow of poverty.[3]

Deprived of the companionship of this devoted brother, and perhaps by way of consolation in his separation, the Admiral took with him his younger son, the little Ferdinand, a lad not yet fourteen years of age, who had been reared at the Court as a page, first to Prince Juan, and after the latter's death, in the same capacity to Queen Isabella herself.

When, years later, Don Ferdinand wrote his history of his father, he recorded the preparation for the departure in these simple words: "The Admiral having been well despatched by their Catholic Majesties, set out from Granada for Seville in the year 1501, and being there, so earnestly solicited

[2] Henry Harrisse, Christophe Colomb devant L'Histoire. Paris: 1892, p. 111.
[3] Thacher, *l.c.*, Vol. III, p. 671.

the fitting out of his squadron, that in a small time he had rigged and provided four ships, the biggest of 70, the least of 50 ton burden, and 140 men and boys, of which number I was one."[4]

The voyage proved a most disastrous one. Hurricane followed hurricane, and the fragile vessels, severely buffeted, time and again seemed on the verge of destruction. The continent was eventually reached, and a futile attempt was made to establish a colony at Belem. Here the "Gallegro" had to be abandoned, as it became impossible to extricate her from a hopeless position in the river, the mouth of which had become closed by sand deposits. Fresh tempests broke out, and the three remaining caravels were sore put to it to keep afloat. Meanwhile Father Alexander, a Franciscan, the only priest who had accompanied the expedition, died, thus leaving the disheartened mariners without the consolation of Holy Mass or the sacraments in their hour of greatest need.

The teredo, or ship-worm, a pest throughout the world, is particularly destructive in the tropics. It is a mollusk, which inhabits long cylindrical holes excavated in the wood, so close together and in such dense numbers, that only a thin film remains be-

[4] Ferdinand Columbus, History of the Life and Actions of Adm. Christopher Columbus, Chapter LXXXVIII. (Churchill's Voyages, edition of 1746, p. 603.)

tween adjacent burrows. They vary in adult stage from a few inches to three feet in length, and increase with great rapidity. Spawning takes place in the spring and summer, and the larvæ live for a time in the free-swimming state along the surface of the water. But before the end of the year, the animals are adults, and the burrows are of great size. They are most destructive during July and August, when they are rapidly attaining their growth. Columbus had reached the tropical seas at the very time that the larvæ spawned, and before long his frail craft, all unprotected as they were by copper sheathing, had become completely honeycombed with these little borers, and consequently they all leaked like sieves.

The Admiral, in his letter to the Sovereigns of Spain, dated from Jamaica, July 7, 1503, after describing the incidents of the voyage up to the abandonment of Belem, continues: "I set out in the name of the Holy Trinity on Easter night with the ships eaten and mouldy and full of holes. I left one, the worst one, in Belem, with many things. In Puerto Bello I left another; only two remained to me in the same state as the others and without boats and provisions, having to pass seven thousand miles of sea and water or I must perish on the

journey with my poor son and brother and so many people. They may now answer me, those who were wont to boast and to blame me, saying,—Why didst thou not so? Why didst thou not steer hither? Why not thither? I would they had been there on that day. I verily believe that another day of knowing otherwise awaits them or our faith is nothing." [5]

Further on, the same letter continues: "At the end of June I arrived at Janahica [Jamaica] always with contrary winds; and the ships in the worst condition; with three pumps, tubs and cauldrons, together with all the crew, I was not able to overcome the water which entered the ship, nor was there any other remedy to help against this. I put myself on the way to go directly to Española, which was 28 leagues off, and I would I had not gone. The other ship, nearly sunken as it was, ran to find a harbour; I would have held out against the violence of the sea, but my ship sank, when God by a miracle put me on the shore. Who will believe what I write? I say that I have not written the one hundredth part in this present letter of these things. Those who were with the Admiral can attest it." [6]

While historians generally assert that it was the intention of Columbus to reach Hispaniola, and to

[5] Cfr. Thacher, *l.c.*, Vol. III, p. 691.
[6] Cfr. Thacher, *l.c.*, p. 692.

all appearances that had seemed to be his purpose, the facts in the matter would indicate that this was merely a pretense on his part and nothing more, in order to quiet the complaints and murmurings of the crew. On the voyage out from Spain, he had been denied permission even to seek shelter there from an approaching hurricane. Moreover, the desire of establishing a colony independent of this stronghold of his enemies, which belonged to him by right, but which he saw slipping from his grasp, would naturally turn his mind toward his beloved Jamaica, especially since the attempt at Belem had proved such a disastrous failure. Of all the spots visited by Columbus in his various voyages, this Island had shown itself the most friendly, and the Admiral's attachment to the Land of Springs found a ready response on the part of the simple Arawaks who peopled it. Furthermore, there is a passage in the letter already quoted, usually overlooked by those who would have Hispaniola as the Admiral's true objective. It runs as follows. "From Española to Janahica there are not more than 28 leagues, as I have already said. I would not have gone to Española even if the ships had been in good condition, because as I have already said, I was commanded by your Majesties not to go on shore. It

is known to God if a command of this kind has been expedient." [7]

It was on June 23, 1503, that, water-logged and in danger of sinking, the "Capitana" and the "Santiago" reached the shores of Jamaica. Columbus had brought them, probably by design, to the very spot where, ten years before, he had careened and caulked the "Nina" and her little consorts. Puerto Bueno he had called it then, though to-day we know it as Dry Harbour Bay. Finding no natives along the shore, and consequently a dearth of provisions, and as fresh water too was scarce at this point, with one last effort on the part of the exhausted crews, on the morrow the sinking caravels put forth again and were finally beached at St. Ann's Bay, the Santa Gloria of the Admiral, probably in the little haven still known as Don Christopher's Cove.

The two wrecks, for such they were in fact, were run aground side by side, and securely lashed together, and as they settled in the sand, the water reached almost to their decks. Cabins were at once erected on the high prows and sterns, hastily constructed hovels, with roofs thatched with fronds of the palm trees, after the method in vogue on the island.

[7] Thacher, *l.c.*, p. 692.

St. Anne's Bay
Named by Columbus "Santa Gloria"

Young Jamaica

The friendly relations with the natives that had existed on the former voyage, were quickly renewed, and an organized commissariat was formed for the regular supply of provisions.

It now became imperative to seek means of communicating with Hispaniola, that a relief vessel might be despatched to them. The undertaking seemed almost humanly impossible. It meant a journey of more than a hundred miles in a fragile canoe over a boisterous and storm-swept sea. At first only one man was found who was hardy enough to undertake it. This was Diego Mendez, one of the Admiral's most devoted followers. When the others shrank back from the dangerous enterprise, he stepped forward with unflinching purpose. His words are worth recording. "Lord: I have one life and no more, I wish to venture it in the service of your Lordship and for the good of all those who are here, because I have hope in God our Lord that having seen the intention with which I do it, He will bring me out safe, as He has done many times." [8]

The canoe, a mere dugout, formed from the trunk of a single tree, was carefully prepared. To steady it in the sea, a keel was securely fitted to it, and boards were nailed along the bow and stern

[8] The Mendez Narrative may be found in Thacher, Vol. II, Chap. CXIII.

to give it greater freeboard, and thus prevent the waves from swamping it. It was then heavily coated with tar, and all was made ready as regards water and provisions.

The first attempt failing, a second expedition was organized. This time, a second canoe was also prepared, and other volunteers joined Mendez, so that each of the fragile canoes contained seven Spaniards besides some eight or ten Indians as rowers.

The story of that trip, a hundred miles and more across the Caribbean Sea, reads like fiction that would test one's credulity. The little Ferdinand Columbus, then fifteen years of age, who watched the departure of the tiny craft, as he stood there at his father's side on the deck of the stranded caravel, the "Capitana," when grown to manhood, recorded, in his Life of the great Discoverer, the narrative almost in the very words as told by Diego Mendez himself. To the critical reader, it may seem extravagant, possibly too self-laudatory. But Ferdinand, who knew the circumstances so well, took no exception, and detracted nothing from Mendez' glory.[9] Brownson, in his translation of Tarducci, thus summarizes the account:

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[9] Ferdinand Columbus, *l.c.*, Chap. CI, CV. (Churchill's Voyages, pp. 620 *seq.*)

"Leaving the coast of Jamaica, they sailed all day in a direct line to Hispaniola, animating the Indians to row with all their strength. There was not a breath of wind, the sky was clear, the sea perfectly calm, so that the heat soon became intolerable. The sun above burnt to the brain with its hot rays, the sea beneath blinded them with its reflection. The Indians, exhausted by heat and fatigue, often plunged into the water to refresh themselves, and returned to the oars with new vigor. Thus flying over the sea, by evening they had lost sight of land. At night, they divided into watches, and while half slept, the others worked; the Indians at the oars, and the Spaniards on guard with weapon in hand, ready to defend themselves in case of any perfidy on the part of their savage companions.

"The sultriness of the day continued through the night, and after watching and toiling in this way, they were all exhausted at return of day. But the two captains, giving them a collation and a short respite, tried to animate them by word and example, from time to time taking a turn themselves at the oars. But a new source of suffering was added, which completely undid the poor Indians. In the fatigue and exhaustion of the previous day and night, they had freely satisfied their thirst without

thought of the future, and were now without a drop of water to moisten their lips. As the sun rose higher, their thirst increased, and the sight of water all around them made it less tolerable. At noon, they lost all courage and could not hold an oar. Then the two captains, seeing the impossibility of enduring the torment of thirst any longer, pretended to find two casks of water, which they had put aside for this emergency, and economizing the precious stock, doled out a sip now and then to their companions, and especially to the Indian rowers, and encouraged them by the assurance that they would come to the little island of Navasa, which lay in their way, and was only eight leagues from Hispaniola. They kept on rowing as well as they could, with their eyes fixed on the horizon, anxiously looking for the island. The day passed and night came on, without any sign of land in any direction. According to their calculation, they had come a sufficient distance from Jamaica to reach Navasa; and they began to fear they had deviated from their course. If it was so, their fate was decided,—they would perish with thirst before arriving at Hispaniola.

"The night was dark, which increased the fear of missing the island; for it was so small and low that they might easily pass close to it in the

dark, without discovering it. The Indians and Christians were again divided into two parties, one to row and keep guard, whilst the other slept; but the torture of thirst prevented any one from closing an eye. The water in the casks was nearly gone, and the captains permitted the Indians to wet their lips more rarely. The poor savages occasionally tried to refresh their burnt palates with the water of the sea; but the momentary relief was followed by greater burning. One of them died, unable to endure the torture of fatigue, heat and thirst, and his body was thrown into the sea; others lay panting at the bottom of the canoes; and the few that still kept up were so troubled in mind and exhausted in body, that the oars scarce moved, and the advance grew ever slower. In this condition they were enveloped in the obscurity of the second night, without seeing any indication of land. . . . Diego Mendez, who could hardly conceal the anguish and despair which now seized even his heart, stood upright in the canoe, straining his eyes around the horizon, which was gradually brightening with the pale light which precedes the rising of the moon. As it rose, he saw it came out from behind a black mass rising above the surface of the sea, and imagining what it must be, called out, Land! Land! That cry was like an electric shock to every heart,

and roused them all to new life. Those who had given way to despair and exhaustion, were at once on their feet, and all eyes were directed to the point where the moon was rising. It was the island of Navasa, so small and low, that but for the rising of the moon, it would have been impossible to detect it in the obscurity of the hour. The error as to the distance they had come, grew out of miscalculation of the speed of the canoes from not taking into account the fatigue of the rowers struggling against the currents. Revived by the hope of safety, and animated by the voice and delight of the captains, the poor savages, collecting all their strength, took hold of the oars with feverish energy, and rowed with such good-will that at day-break they reached land. All sprang ashore, and—with the fervor we may imagine—thanked God, whom they adored for saving them beyond all hope.

"Navasa was not so much an island as a mass of rocks, scarce half-a-league in circumference, without a tree or bush. It had no springs, but here and there, in the hollow of the rocks, they found a little rain water, which they passed from rock to rock looking for and drinking. In vain the more prudent endeavoured to restrain the rest and warned them of the danger they ran; their burning thirst rendered them deaf to all advice. The Spaniards,

who had suffered least, restrained themselves to some extent; but the poor Indians whose exertions had augmented their thirst till it became a burning fever, threw themselves on the fresh water with a sort of frenzy, and drank so greedily that some of them died almost instantly, and more became seriously ill. When their thirst was quenched, they began to look for food, and found some shell-fish among the weeds, cast upon the beach by the tide. Here and there, they found a few chips of wood, with which they made a fire, and cooked the fish, which they ate with the greatest appetite and relish. The rest of the day was devoted to repose, which was all the pleasanter from the sight of Hispaniola, with its lofty mountains delineated on the horizon eight leagues distance. At sunset, they continued their voyage in the cool of the evening, and, refreshed by their rest, rowed bravely all night, and the next morning came to Cape Tiburon, the nearest point of Hispaniola, on the fourth day after leaving Jamaica." [10]

From here despite a quartan fever that consumed him, Mendez pushed on by canoe along the coast more than two hundred miles, and then, alone and on foot, through almost impenetrable forests and over rugged mountains he forced his way to find the

[10] Tarducci, Life of Christopher Columbus, Bk. II, Chap. XXIV.

Governor, Ovando, who received him with feigned kindness and mock concern about the situation of the Admiral, whom he bitterly hated. He was fair in his promises, but always found some excuse for deferring active help. For days, and weeks, and even months, the loyal Mendez urged the cause of the unfortunates marooned and exposed to countless dangers on the distant shore of Jamaica, but all in vain. Promises, endless promises, and nothing more.

Meanwhile, sore distress harassed the wretched colony at Santa Gloria. Columbus himself was seriously ill, and with the departure of the canoes he had been deprived of the support of most of his staunchest friends. Those who remained comprised many disturbing elements, and as the weeks passed away, and no relief came, the general consensus was, that the expedition had failed, and that the canoes and all their occupants had been surely lost. Discontent yielded to defiance of all restraint, and insubordination finally gave way to open rebellion. Francesco de Porras was the leader of the malcontents, and on January 2, 1504, for a time, the Admiral's very life was in danger. His brother Bartholomew's prudent self-restraint alone saved the situation. Eventually, the mutineers commandeered all the canoes that came to hand, and loading

them with provisions, they undertook to follow in the way that Mendez had taken. Three times they attempted the passage, and three times were they driven back by the boisterous sea, before they had covered many leagues. Finally they abandoned the project. They penetrated to the interior of the island, and began to rob and grievously maltreat the peaceful Arawaks, placing the blame for everything on the Admiral, protesting that it was entirely at his orders, that they so conducted themselves, and arrogantly bidding the Indians to go to him for payment for what they seized or destroyed.

As a consequence of all this, the poor Indians naturally refused longer to supply the needs even of those who remained upon the battered hulks. Then it was, that Columbus called into play his knowledge of an approaching eclipse of the moon.[11] The incident is thus described by Ferdinand Columbus, who was a witness of all that occurred.

"As God never abandons any one who entreats Him as the Admiral did, He showed him how to provide for everything, and as it was in this way He remembered that there would be an eclipse of the moon early in the evening of the third day; and through an Indian from Hispaniola, who was

[11] The eclipse took place on Feb. 29, 1504. A reproduction from Muller's Calendarium of 1474, which Columbus was probably following, may be found in Thacher, *l.c.*, II, Chap. CX.

with us, he called a meeting of the principal Indians of the province, saying he wished to speak to them of a feast he had determined to give. When they had assembled the day preceding the eclipse, he told them, through the interpreter, that we were Christians who believed in God who dwelt in heaven, and were subject to Him; that He cared for the good and punished the wicked; that He had not permitted the Christian rebels to reach Hispaniola as Diego Mendez and Fiesco had done; but they had undergone the toils and perils that were known all over the island. As to the Indians themselves, God, seeing the slight pains they took to supply provisions for our pay and ransom, was very angry at them, and had determined to punish them by famine and pestilence. Lest they might not believe this, He would show them an evident proof in the sky, so that they might be sure that the chastisement was sent by Him. They should observe the appearance of the moon that night; they would see it come out angry and inflamed, as a sign of the evils God would send them.

"After this discourse, the Indians went away, some in fear, and others thinking it was an idle threat. But the eclipse appearing, and increasing as the moon rose higher, the Indians became thoughtful, and in their fear ran to the ships,

loaded with provisions, and with tears begged the Admiral to intercede for them with God in every way, not to execute His wrath against them, and promised to bring him for the future whatever he required.

"The Admiral replied that he would speak to his God for a while, and shut himself up whilst the eclipse was increasing, and they were calling on him for help. When the Admiral saw that the eclipse was greatest and about to diminish, he came out of his room, saying that he had supplicated his God, and prayed for them, and had promised in their name that henceforth they would be good and treat the Christians well, bringing them food and necessaries, and God had forgiven them, in token of which they would see the anger and inflammation pass away from the moon. As this occurred while he was speaking, they gave great thanks to the Admiral, and praise to his God. Thenceforth they were always diligent in furnishing whatever he required, constantly praising the Christian's God; for, the eclipses which they had previously seen, they believed had been to their injury, not understanding the phenomena; and, not knowing that it occurs at stated times, nor believing it possible to know on earth what will take place in the sky, they

were sure that the God of the Christians had revealed it to the Admiral." [12]

Aside from the ethical question of this subterfuge, it did not originate in the mind of Columbus alone. Possibly, however, he may not have been familiar with the narrative of Anna Comnena, who tells how her father, the Emperor Alexis Comnenus I, who died in 1118, had made use of a similar artifice in his own day.[13]

But to return to Diego Mendez. For seven long months had he vainly striven to prevail on Ovando, the governor of Hispaniola, to send relief to Columbus and his stranded friends. One pretext gave way to another. The Governor was still fair-spoken, made endless promises, but did nothing to expedite the matter. A bitter, uncompromising enemy of the Admiral, it would seem that he hoped to indirectly compass his death, and thus once and for all remove him and his pretensions. At length, probably to satisfy himself whether or not privation and suffering had done their work effectively, he despatched a small caravel, in command of the Admiral's most bitter personal enemy, Diego de Escoba. And was it in biting irony or a fiendish cruelty that the only provisions forwarded to these

[12] Ferdinand Columbus, *l.c.*, Chap. CIII (Brownson's Translation).

[13] Thomas Southey, Chronological History of the West Indies. London: 1827, Vol. I, p. 95.

starving men was a cask of wine and a single quarter of salt pork?

Following instructions, Escoba, on reaching Jamaica, left his caravel at a distance from the shore, and in a little boat approached the rotting hulks just near enough to deliver a letter from Ovando and transfer the Governor's shameless gift. He then drew off, and waited the answer of the Admiral, without holding the slightest converse with the pleading, frenzied occupants of the wrecks. Columbus in his reply, humbly cast himself at the mercy of his enemy, and begged that relief be speedily sent to them. Escoba received this note in silence and haughty reserve, rowed out to his caravel, and turned her prow back toward Hispaniola, leaving the poor unfortunates in blank despair, abandoned to their fate.

Matters now went from bad to worse, and it was in the darkest hour, when all seemed lost, that a cry of pity and anguish was wrung from a noble heart. Bryan Edwards, a distinguished historian of Jamaica, spent the best part of his years in the midst of the scenes he has so well described. He was repeatedly a member of the Jamaica House of Assembly, where he acted at times as Chairman of Committees. This gave him access to many valu-

able documents, one of which he thus describes:[14]

"There is preserved among the Journals of the Hon. Council of Jamaica, a very old volume in MS. consisting of diaries and reports of Governors, which relate chiefly to the proceedings of the army and other transactions in the first settlement of the colony. In this book is to be found the translation of a letter to the King of Spain, said to be written by Columbus during his confinement on this Island. As it appears to me to bear marks of authenticity, I shall present it to my readers. It was written probably about eight months after the departure of his messenger Diego Mendez, who had attempted to reach Hispaniola in an Indian canoe. Hearing nothing from him in that interval, Columbus seems to have relinquished every hope of relief, and to have written this letter in an hour of despondency, not as having any probable means of sending it to Spain, but on the idea that it would be found after his death.—It is as follows:

> *A letter from Christopher Columbus, in Jamaica, to King Ferdinand.*
>
> JAMAICA, 1504.
>
> Diego Mendez and the papers I sent by him, will show your Highness what rich mines of

[14] Bryan Edwards, History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies. London: 1793, Vol. I, p. 123n.

gold I have discovered in Veragua, and how I intended to have left my brother at the river Belin *(sic)*, if the judgments of Heaven and the greatest misfortunes in the world had not prevented it. However, it is sufficient that your Highness and your successors will have the glory and advantage of all, and that the full discovery and settlement are reserved for happier persons than the unfortunate Columbus. If God be so merciful to me as to conduct Mendez to Spain, I doubt not but he will convince your Highness and my great mistress that this will not only be a Castile and Leon, but a discovery of a world of subjects, lands and wealth, greater than man's unbounded fancy could ever comprehend, or avarice itself covet: but neither he, this paper, nor the tongue of mortal man can express the anguish and afflictions of my body and mind; nor the miseries and dangers of my son, brother, and friends! Already have we been confined ten months in this place, lodged on the open decks of our ships, that are run on shore and lashed together; those of my men that were in health have mutinied under the Porras's of Seville, my friends that were faithful are mostly sick and dying, we have consumed the Indians' pro-

visions, so that they abandon us; all therefore are like to perish by hunger, and these miseries are accompanied with so many aggravating circumstances, that render me the most wretched object of misfortune this world shall ever see; as if the displeasure of Heaven seconded the envy of Spain, and would punish as criminal those undertakings and discoveries which former ages would have acknowledged as great and meritorious actions! Good Heaven, and you holy saints that dwell in it, let the King Don Ferdinand and my illustrious mistress Doña Isabella know, that my zeal for their service and interest hath brought me thus low; for it is impossible to live and have afflictions equal to mine. I see, and with horror apprehend, my own, and for my sake, my unfortunate and deserving people's destruction. Alas, piety and justice have retired to their habitations above, and it is a crime to have undertaken and performed too much! As my misery makes my life a burden to myself, so I fear the empty titles of Viceroy and Admiral, render me obnoxious to the hatred of the Spanish nation. It is visible that all methods are adopted to cut the thread that is breaking; for I am in my old age, oppressed

with insupportable pains of the gout, and am now languishing and expiring with that and other infirmities, among savages, where I have neither medicines nor provisions for the body, priest nor sacrament for the soul. My men in state of revolt; my brother, my son, and those that are faithful, sick, starving and dying; the Indians have abandoned us, and the Governor of San Domingo has sent rather to see if I am dead, than to succor us, or carry me alive from hence; for his boat neither delivered a letter, nor spoke with, nor would receive any letter from us; so I conclude your Highness's officers intend that here my voyages and life should terminate. O blessed Mother of God, that compassionates the miserable and oppressed, why did not cruel Bovadilla kill me when he robbed me and my brother of our dearly purchased gold, and sent us to Spain in chains without trial, crime or shadow of misconduct? These chains are all the treasures I have, and they shall be buried with me, if I chance to have a coffin or grave; for I would have the remembrance of so unjust an action perish with me, and, for the glory of the Spanish name, be eternally forgotten. Let it not bring a further infamy on the Castillian name,

nor let ages to come know there were wretches so vile in this, that think to recommend themselves to your Majesty by destroying the unfortunate and miserable Christopher Columbus, not for his crimes, but for his services in discovering and giving to Spain a new world. As it was Heaven itself that inspired and conducted me to it, the Heavens will weep for me, and shew pity! Let the earth, and every soul on it that loves justice and mercy, weep for me! And you, O glorified saints of God, that know my innocency and see my sufferings here, have mercy! for though this present age is envious or obdurate, surely those that are to come will pity me when they are told that Christopher Columbus, with his own fortune, ran the hazard of his own and his brother's lives, and, with little or no expense to the Crown of Spain, in ten years, and four voyages, rendered greater service than ever mortal man did to prince or kingdom, yet was left to perish, without being charged with the least crime, in poverty and misery; all but his chains having been taken from him; so that he who gave Spain another world, had neither safety in it, nor yet a cottage for himself, nor his wretched family; but should Heaven still

> persecute me, and seem displeased with what I have done, as if the discovery of this new world may be fatal to the old, and as a punishment bring my life to a period in this miserable place, yet do you, good angels, you that succor the oppressed and innocent, bring this paper to my good mistress. She knows how much I have done, and will believe what I have suffered for her glory and service, and will be so just and pious as not to let the children of him that has brought to Spain such immense riches, and added to it vast and unknown kingdoms and empires, want bread, or subsist only on alms. She, if she lives, will consider that cruelty and ingratitude will bring down the wrath of Heaven, so that the wealth I have discovered, shall be the means of stirring up all mankind to revenge and rapine, and the Spanish nation suffer hereafter, for what envious, malicious and ungrateful people, do now.

The physical ills of the Admiral incapacitated him most of the time, and those who remained faithful to him had become worn and emaciated. The lad Ferdinand stood up well under the strain, so well in fact, that it later wrung from his father

the proud testimony, that "his conduct during the fatigues and disasters of the voyage proved that he possessed with all his vivacity, the calm judgment and good sense of a grown man."[15] But it was Don Bartholomew, the Adelantado, who stood out pre-eminent in the time of trial. His iron frame refused to yield, and he exerted his great strength of mind and body alike in the service of his brother. Single-handed he seemed the guardian and protector of all the rest.

The attitude of the mutineers under Porras became daily more threatening and overbearing. Fear of the Admiral's brother alone held them in check. However, on Sunday May 19, 1504, they finally planned attacking the stranded vessels, with the intention of seizing whatever supplies still remained, and of making a prisoner of the Admiral. With this purpose in view, they advanced as far as the Indian village of Maima, the site of the future town of Sevilla Nueva, and less than a mile from Don Christopher's Cove.

Columbus at the time was in a serious condition, suffering great bodily pain, and utterly unable to leave his bed. His companions, for the most part gentlemen and civilians, were in an exhausted condition from illness and close confinement to the

[15] Letter to Don Diego, Dec. 1, 1504.

ships. Mustering all who could possibly drag themselves along, even his nephew Ferdinand, child that he was, being included, Don Bartholomew gathered some fifty men about him, and fearlessly advanced against the rebels. The malcontents were numerically as strong, and were all rough seamen, inured to hardships. They had, moreover, physically benefited by their roving life in the woods, where their wants had been amply satisfied by preying on the natives, besides the capture of birds and the small hutties, which Ferdinand Columbus describes as "little creatures like rabbits." [16]

As Don Bartholomew, then, and his faithful followers approached the village where Porras' band had foregathered, the latter would not even listen to a parley. They saw a group of worn, wasted beings, resembling corpses rather than living men. The Adelantado alone stood forth a giant of strength among them. Could they strike down this leader, the rest of the task would be an easy matter. Accordingly, with a loud cry of "Slay! Slay!" they rushed to conflict. Six of their number, supposed to be the ablest and strongest among them, pledged themselves by oath, to stand together and make short shrift of Don Bartholomew. The latter stood upon a little eminence and went forward to

[16] Ferdinand Columbus, *l.c.*, Chap. CI.

meet the onrush of his foes, bravely supported by his little band. Tall and of powerful physique, the Adelantado towered above the fray, his sword working havoc on all who ventured near. One by one, his assailants went down before him. Finally, Porras himself rushed furiously upon him and with a mighty blow cut through his shield and wounded his arm as well. But, as the sword remained fixed in the shield, Don Bartholomew grappled with his adversary and by sheer strength bound him captive. Seeing the downfall of their leader, the mutineers took to flight, and the Adelantado led his followers back to the ships, bearing his prisoner with him. The youthful Ferdinand, who bravely stood at his Uncle's side, in simple unaffected words has preserved for us this stirring story of the prowess of Don Bartholomew.[17]

This put an end to the mutiny. The following day, the unfortunate sailors came pleading for pardon, and promised every possible amend. Columbus yielded to their entreaty, taking care, however, to keep their leader safe in irons.

In the meantime, Diego Mendez had finally succeeded in equipping a vessel at the Admiral's expense, and when Ovando once saw that relief was imminent, he judged it prudent, especially in view

[17] Ferdinand Columbus, *l.c.*, Chapter CVII.

of the public storm of indignation, to show a sudden turn of zeal in behalf of the sufferers in Jamaica, and so he added another caravel, and placed it under the command of Don Diego de Salcedo, to whom Mendez had already entrusted the work of rescue.

One cannot picture the hysterical joy of the unfortunate castaways, as they beheld the two caravels in the offing that bright morning in June, and realized that at last, after more than a year, shipwrecked and marooned, relief was now at hand.

Columbus at once took charge of one of the vessels, and on the other he placed the mutineers. It was June 28, 1504, that they set sail from Santa Gloria, and as the Admiral, broken in body and weakened in spirit, gazed back for the last time on those glorious mountains of the Isle of Springs, now blending their purple haze into the cobalt blue of the heavens to vanish in a moment from his straining gaze, there must have been a sadness in his noble, generous heart. This paradise of his dreams had proved his purgatory here on earth. But even into primeval Eden the serpent found its way, and with sin the garden of God-given happiness lost its chief adornment, the innocence of man. So, too, had sinful hate and unbridled passion on the part of his benighted followers destroyed

the simplicity and the trustful innocence of the confiding Arawaks, and man had done another grievous wrong against almighty God and against His works. After the lapse from grace, the first man, Adam, might never more return to the bright Garden of Eden, but to his son would the Admiral entrust this ruined paradise, and pray that God might yet condone the wrong, and save the children of the Jamaica "bush" from the consequences of the evil that had been wrought.

CHAPTER V

THE MARQUIS OF JAMAICA

CHARLEVOIX, in his History of San Domingo, speaking of an agreement between the Crown of Spain and the grandson of Christopher Columbus, remarks: "By this treaty Don Luis was declared Captain-General of the Island of Hispaniola, but with such great limitations that there remained to him little more than the title. . . . Finally he gave up all his rights and all his pretensions to the perpetual Vice-Royalty of the New World, for the Title of Duke of Veragua and Marquis of La Vega. This was a large town in Jamaica; and after a time it became customary to substitute the name of the Island for this place." [1]

This passage from Charlevoix is probably the origin of the common impression that originally the Marquisate of Don Luis Colon y Toledo took

[1] Pierre F. X. Charlevoix, S. J., Histoire de L'Isle Espagnole. Paris: 1731, Vol. I, p. 476.

its title from the city now known as Spanishtown, when in reality, at the very beginning, it was derived from the Island; the town in question later yielding the title for Duke, in place of that of Veragua. The story is an interesting one. It is the culmination of royal duplicity and fraud and high-handed exercise of kingly power.

Before setting out on his first voyage, Christopher Columbus signed an agreement with the Sovereigns of Spain, on April 17, 1492, that came to be known as the Articles of Capitulation. One of the two witnesses to this pact was none other than Juan Perez, the Guardian of La Rabida. After guaranteeing to the Genoese Adventurer, regarding the islands and mainlands that he might discover, the title of Admiral, with all the prerogatives of the High Admiral of Castile, it further provided that he should be Viceroy and Governor-General of all lands thus discovered or acquired, with the power to suggest the names for incumbents of all offices under him. By Article III, he was to receive one-tenth of the profits arising from whatever source within his Admiralty. Article IV entrusted to him as Admiral sole jurisdiction of any suit growing out of trade or traffic within his Admiralty. Article V, finally, accorded to him the right to contribute one-eighth of the cost of every commer-

cial enterprise with the consequent enjoyment of one-eighth of the profits.

As regards the Admiralty, these Articles of Capitulation expressly created Columbus "Admiral of all those islands and mainlands which by his activity and industry shall be discovered and acquired in the said oceans during his lifetime, and likewise after his death, his heirs and successors one after the other in perpetuity with all the pre-eminences and prerogatives appertaining to the same office and in the same manner as Don Alfonso Enriquez, the High Admiral of Castile and his predecessors in the said office held it in their districts." [2]

Don Alfonso Enriquez, the uncle of John II of Castile, was first appointed by Henry III his High Admiral of the Sea, on April 4, 1405. Among other rights, the Patent specified: "I give you my full and complete power in order that you may be able to exercise and may exercise a civil and criminal jurisdiction which belongs and ought to belong to the said office of Admiralty, in any manner whatsoever in all the rights of the sea, both to issue letters of marque and to judge all the suits which may arise at sea and also in the harbors

[2] The full text of the Articles of Capitulation may be found in Thacher, Christopher Columbus, Vol. I, Chap. LIII.

and their environs so far as the salt water enters and vessels navigate, and that you, the said Admiral, may have the power to appoint and may appoint your alcaldes, bailiffs, scriveners, and officials in all the towns and places of my kingdoms which are seaports and that they may take cognisance of, and may decide all the suits criminal and civil, which may arise at sea and in the rivers where the currents rise and fall, etc."

On August 17, 1416, John II confirmed the patent of his uncle as High Admiral and added as further privileges: "And I ordain that of all the gains which my said High Admiral may receive or make in my fleet or at sea, I shall receive two parts and the said High Admiral the third part." And again: "Likewise I order and command that in the case of all galleys, ships, galleots, vessels and other foists whatsoever which may be equipped, for other parts whereof the fifth part is payable to me, I am to receive two-thirds of the said fifth, and the said Admiral one-third thereof, etc."

Legally, then, to Columbus, and through him to his heirs, belonged not only the jurisdiction over "all those islands and mainlands which by his activity and industry shall be discovered and acquired," but also one-third of the revenues accruing therefrom. From this it is clear why Columbus

insisted in his will, that his heir should ever value the title of Admiral before every other distinction. On it rested pre-eminently his claim against the Crown.

As a consequence of all this, the Articles of Capitulation, if carried to a logical conclusion, guaranteed to Columbus and his heirs, a third part of all gains and profits in the New World, by Article I; plus a tenth part of all gains and profits in the New World by Article III; plus an eighth part of all such gains and profits by Article V. Mathematically, this works out as sixty-seven one-hundred-and-twentieths, or nearly 56% of all gains and profits in the New World. Strictly speaking, too, this share was to be computed on the gross profit accruing from his discoveries, independent of all expenses connected with the same. It can be easily understood, then, how impossible it would have been to carry out such a compact, even had it suited the policy of the Sovereigns to attempt it.

Without question, Queen Isabella never realized the full significance of the concession, especially as regarded the Admiralty. Possibly the crafty Ferdinand may have had some inkling of it, but if so, his egotism felt assured that should Columbus ever assert his claims, it would be a simple matter to circumvent them.

As a matter of fact, there was never the slightest intention on the part of the Government, to grant Columbus even a shadow of justice or equity. Scarcely had the first glad acclaim that greeted the Discoverer of a New World died away, when all the power of the Court was bent on restricting the privileges that had been solemnly granted, and in systematically thwarting the legitimate aims and ambitions of the Admiral.

The first move was a crafty one on the part of King Ferdinand, and serves as an indication of how unscrupulous he could be in the attainment of his ends. Tarducci tells us, how, when the Bulls arrived from Rome appointing a Vicar Apostolic to accompany the expedition that was to go out and colonize the New World, on finding that the nominee for the office was almost identical in name with an accomplished diplomat who chanced to be devoted to his own interests, Ferdinand substituted his friend for the selection of the Holy Father, delivered to him the Bulls, had him duly consecrated, and then sent him out to fill the position to which he had not been named.[3]

Disagreement between this Ecclesiastic and Columbus started the long line of misfortunes that followed the Discoverer to his death. It would ap-

[3] Tarducci, Life of Christopher Columbus, Vol. I, p. 358.

pear as if Ferdinand had a secret understanding with this creature of his, and when a refractory official had been recalled from Hispaniola, the Sovereign wrote under date of April 13, 1494, addressing himself to Columbus: "Let the person whom you and Father Boyl may judge proper fill this office, until we have provided another for it here." This would imply that Father Boyl was a check on the Admiral's independent action, and the wily King may well have taken this effective means of impressing the fact on Columbus.

Shortly after, in contravention of the clear rights guaranteed by the Articles of Capitulation, letters patent were issued to navigators, to press forward the work of discovery independently. Commissioners were despatched to inquire into the doings of the Admiral, armed with plenipotentiary powers, which they were not slow to exercise. And, finally, Columbus was sent back to Spain in chains, to the everlasting shame of his enemies.

There were spasmodic efforts on the part of Queen Isabella to right the wrongs done him, and each voyage started with a promise of better things, only to close with greater shame and anguish for the Admiral. Death at length brought release from bodily ill and disappointment of soul, and the Admiral bequeathed to his heirs the portion of in-

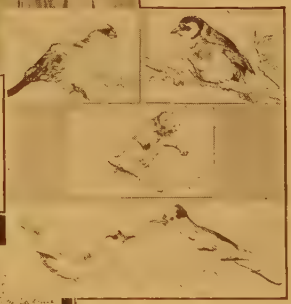
justice and persecution that had been his reward in life.

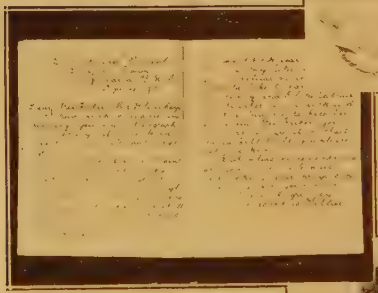
Columbus died on May 20, 1506, and on June 2nd following, his son Diego was acknowledged by King Ferdinand as heir and successor. The title of Admiral was accorded him; that of Viceroy was withheld on one excuse after another. When he had tried all other means without avail, in 1508, Don Diego brought suit before the Council of the Indies, for the restoration of his rights, but the case dragged along for many years, in fact beyond his lifetime.

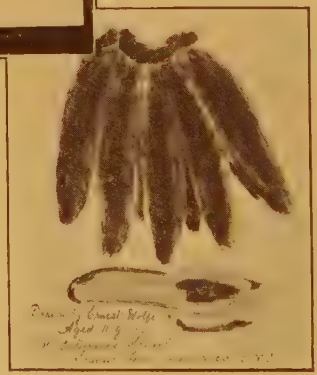
Meanwhile, having married Doña Maria de Toledo, niece of the all-powerful favorite of the King, the Duke of Alva, some pretense at justice was accorded him, and he was designated as the Governor of Hispaniola and its dependencies.

The young Admiral with his wife and a gay company of courtiers sailed for the New World, and arrived at San Domingo on July 10, 1509. The son of the great Discoverer may have felt that now at last he was coming into his own; but he little appreciated the ingenuity and duplicity of Ferdinand, who immediately proceeded to make his tenure of the Admiralty a legal fiction. It was in that same year, 1509, that by royal edict there was established at San Domingo a Court to be known as

Stewart Castle Estate
On the hills near Refuge







Sister Xavier with two of her pupils, Adolphus Gallier and Ernest Wolfe, with specimens of their work and that of other school children

the Royal Audience. Technically it was to personify His Majesty himself, since no appeal might avail from the Admiral within his jurisdiction except to the Royal Person direct. Practically this new invention was simply a Court of Appeals that had been superimposed over the authority of the Admiral, whose protests, one and all, were utterly ignored.

Another disgraceful breach of faith on the part of the shameless Ferdinand and his creatures who constituted the Council of the Indies, became known to Don Diego only after his arrival in San Domingo. As heir to his father, and Admiral of the Ocean, his jurisdiction clearly embraced the coast of Darien and the Island of Jamaica, both of which the First Admiral had discovered, and had further explored thoroughly their coast or shore line. Without even being consulted in the matter, Don Diego was suddenly appraised of the fact that Darien had been divided by the King into two provinces, one of which had been assigned to Alonzo de Ojedo, the other to Diego de Nicuessa, and that further, the Island of Jamaica had been attached to both provinces, to furnish them with food supplies.

Realizing how futile had been his previous protests, and knowing that possession constitutes nine points in the law, the Admiral determined to take

matters into his own hands at least as regarded Jamaica. This island must have been especially dear to the Columbus family. Aside from the personal attachment that Don Christopher had always felt for it, the year that he and his followers remained marooned upon its northern shore must have almost sanctified it in the memories of his dear ones. An expedition was immediately organized to take possession of the Island. Seventy men under Juan de Esquivel were despatched for the purpose, and the colony was established near the very spot where the abandoned ships of the Discoverer were still resting in the sands at Don Christopher's Cove.

The historian Gardner tells us: "Juan de Esquivel, probably assisted by Diego Columbus, accordingly laid the foundation of the first city, near the site of the deserted Indian village of Mayma. It was called Sevilla Nueva." [4]

Early chroniclers connect Diego Columbus with the active founding of this city, and yet what we know of the movements of the Admiral would seem to preclude all possibility of his presence in the island at this time. May it not be possible, that the Diego Columbus referred to, was not the Admiral of that name, but the Admiral's uncle, Diego,

[4] Gardner, History of Jamaica, p. 8.

the younger brother of Don Christopher? This man had acted as Governor of Hispaniola at the time when the First Admiral discovered Jamaica. Together with the third brother, Don Bartholomew, he had shared the chains of the Discoverer when all three had been sent back to Spain in 1500. Then, disgusted with the world, and substituting the favor of God for that of earthly kings, he had gratified his yearning of years and consecrated himself to the service of the altar. He accompanied his nephew to the colony in 1509, and then all trace of him is lost, except that in the nephew's will we find a memorandum indicating that he died in Seville about five years later.[5] How was he occupied in the meantime? The records of San Domingo as far as known do not contain the slightest reference to him, though here and there we come across traces of his brother Don Bartholomew, the Adelantado.

Would it not seem reasonable to expect that in view of the importance of holding Jamaica against the pretensions of Ojedo and Nicuessa, some member of the Columbus family should be on the scene? Bartholomew certainly remained in Hispaniola; he was being reserved for an expedition into Cuba. Don Diego, the nephew, was apparently

[5] The Will of Don Diego may be found in Thacher, *l.c.*, Vol. III, p. 671.

otherwise employed. The only one left would be Don Diego, the uncle, who would join the adventure in the capacity of priest and missionary, and consequently not in command, a position for which his past experience would prove him little qualified.

This supposition would further explain the statement in Martin's *History of the West Indies*, where, in connection with the founding of Sevilla Nueva, we read: "Ferdinand, another son of Columbus, was despatched from Spain to establish a monastery, and assist in the extension of the new colony." [6] Despite the frequent repetition of historians, that Ferdinand Columbus became a priest, it is now clear that such was not a fact, and it is probably another case of mistaken identity; his uncle Diego being really the one to whom reference is made.

Be this as it may, the fact remains that the fortunes of the Columbus family are linked up with Jamaica, and not with Hispaniola or any other of the discoveries of the First Admiral, with the single exception of Veragua, and that too quickly became subordinate to Jamaica.

The entire administration of the Second Admiral was marked by constant friction with the Crown. Five times he was forced to return to Spain to de-

[6] R. Montgomery Martin, History of the West Indies. London: 1836, Vol. 1, p. 6.

fend his rights, and more than half his official life was spent at Court in futile efforts to have justice done.

Immediately after the establishment of the colony in Jamaica, it was evidently the purpose of the Admiral to despatch his uncle, Don Bartholomew, to Cuba for a like purpose. Anticipating this, the King summoned the Adelantado to Court, under the pretense of wishing him near his Royal Person. In reality, he appears to have been harboring an unworthy suspicion that the real reason why Jamaica and Cuba were not as productive in gold as other lands recently discovered, must be due to the fact that the Admiral and his friends were secreting the riches for themselves.[7] This may explain his subsequent attitude toward Jamaica. For, scarcely had the town of Sevilla Nueva been established, when he began to interfere with the Admiral's appointee as lieutenant there.

In July, 1511, we find him writing to Don Diego: "Juan de Esquivel and the Christians in Jamaica should endeavor to find gold. If there is none, orders will be given as to how the colonists might live. In the meantime Esquivel should be very careful to make the Indians grow as much

[7] J. A. Wright, Early History of Cuba, New York: 1916, p. 221.

food as possible."[8] At the time of this letter, the Admiral was in Spain, safeguarding his interests. Shortly after, he returned to Hispaniola, and in the following February, the King wrote to him again, and after referring to some fraudulent transactions in the island of Trinidad, adds rather naïvely: "Although I consider Juan de Esquivel a good man from what you have written me about him, yet it might be that he has some leaning that way." This subtle insinuation is followed up in December of the same year by more specific instructions. He states openly that he had been informed "that Juan de Esquivel, whom you sent as your lieutenant to the island of Jamaica, had served me very negligently in the conversion of the Indians and pacification of the island as well as in the increase of our royal revenues."[9] He orders the judges of appeal of Hispaniola to audit the accounts of Esquivel, and Don Diego is to appoint another representative in his place.

The Admiral, it would appear, failed to accept the hint of the Sovereign as regards the removal of his faithful lieutenant, whose only crime was clearly his fidelity to the interests of the heir of the Discoverer. He made another journey to Spain, but under date of November 28, 1514, we find the

[8] Cundall, Jamaica Under the Spaniards, p. 1.
[9] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 2.

King addressing Francisco de Garay, as "Our Colonizer on the Island of Jamaica." [10]

This is the same Garay, who, when the First Admiral was about to return to Spain with Aguado in 1496, was sent by Columbus on a gold-hunting expedition, and discovered the mine that was to become famous under the title of St. Christopher, and where four years later he secured a remarkable lump of pure gold. Charlevoix relates how a slave was bathing in the River Hayna and found it there. The cry of astonishment brought Garay to the scene. He immediately appropriated the find to himself, and why not? The slave, it seems, belonged to him, consequently the gold. The value of the nugget was estimated at 4000 golden pesos, a small fortune in itself, and the piece was so large and of such a shape, that in joy, Garay killed and roasted a pig, and carved it on this natural golden platter, boasting that no king had ever better service.[11]

Possibly it was Garay's reputation as a finder of gold that guided the King now in his selection, when he despatched him to Jamaica as the first Governor by Royal appointment, in the spring of 1515. This action would indicate the King's

[10] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 2.
[11] Charlevoix, Histoire de L'Isle Espagnole, Vol. I, pp. 180, 268.

intention of even further limiting the powers of the Admiral, and of depriving him of jurisdiction over this island. In fact, in the preceding year, Ferdinand had written direct to Diego Velasquez, Don Diego's lieutenant in Cuba, in such a tone as to eliminate the Admiral from all authority there.[12]

Up to this time, the head of the administration in both Cuba and Jamaica was, strictly speaking, only entitled to the appellation "Governor's Lieutenant" (*tiente de gobernador*), since he merely acted in place of the Governor, who was in reality the Admiral himself. However, through courtesy, he was usually called "Governor."

Don Diego once again made the long, dangerous journey to the Spanish Court. It was during this visit that occurred the conversation preserved for us by Las Casas, who received it directly from the lips of the Second Admiral shortly after it had taken place. In an unusual burst of candor, the King made confession: "Look you, Admiral, I would willingly bestow on you your rights if it were not for your sons and successor." To which the Admiral could only make answer: "Sire, is it reasonable that I should have to pay and suffer for the shortcomings of sons and successors whom

[12] Wright, *l.c.*, p. 45.

I may never have?"[13] The plea availed him nothing, and during the rest of Ferdinand's reign there was not even an effort made to cloak over the injustice done him. With the succession of Charles V, however, for a time the general condition of affairs seemed to brighten.

In May, 1520, the new King wrote to the officials of the islands that fell within Don Diego's jurisdiction, informing them of a change in policy. His letter to Jamaica announced that Don Diego was about to resume charge of his office, and insisted that "henceforth past methods shall cease, for they have been in great disservice to us and harm to the island. I therefore command that you will henceforth act so that there will be entire agreement between you and him."[14]

An amusing sidelight is thrown on this seeming desire to do justice at least in part, by a clause in the will of Diego Columbus, signed by him on May 2, 1523, wherein we read: "Item, The Emperor, our Lord, owes me ten thousand new ducats which I loaned him in cash in the city of Corunna when he went to Flanders, as will appear by the cedula signed by his name, which is in the possession of the Vice-Queen, my wife." The facts

[13] Las Casas, Historia, Vol. III, p. 237.
[14] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 5.

in the case are these. The newly elected Emperor Charles was sailing from Corunna, on his way to Flanders for his Coronation, and found himself hard pressed for ready cash. He had been accompanied to the port of embarkation by Don Diego Columbus among others, and found it convenient to borrow from the man, who was asking from him nothing but justice, the sum of ten thousand ducats, giving his note of hand in exchange. The date of this interesting document is May 20, 1520, a strange coincidence to say the least, as it was in that same month and year that he despatched his letters to the Indies, reinstating as it were the son of the Discoverer.

Toward the end of 1521, or early in the following year, Don Diego visited Cuba.[15] It would seem but natural that he should also stop at Jamaica on his way, especially since we know that Garay, the Governor, was absent from the Island about this time, as shown from a letter of the Emperor, dated January, 1522, and addressed to the officials of the Island, relative to sending cattle and cassava bread to Panama, "as Garay is absent from Jamaica." [16]

More than six years before, this same Garay had

[15] Wright, *l.c.*, p. 92.
[16] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 5.

written of his intention of visiting "the site of the town on the other side." [17] And Renny, the historian, referring to the foundation of the present Spanishtown, observes: "In what year the foundation of this capital was laid is uncertain, but it seems probable that it took place in the year 1523. It was founded by Diego Columbus himself, but he soon afterward retired to his native country." [18]

From a letter of the King to Garay in August, 1519, we gather that the site of Sevilla Nueva had already been shifted,[19] though it still remained in the same general neighborhood, and while we know that the colony was not formally transferred across the Island until 1534, may it not be possible that Don Diego in 1522 actually visited the "site of the town on the other side," and "laid the foundation" of what was later to be Villa de la Vega, the present Spanishtown, thus reconciling all statements?

At all events, the Admiral, if he did visit Jamaica, did not remain there long. And in 1523 he was summoned to Court to give an account of his administration, in consequence of many complaints that had been made against him. He

[17] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 3.
[18] Renny, History of Jamaica, p. 11.
[19] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 4.

accordingly sailed from San Domingo on September 8, 1523, and for nearly three years he followed the Court from place to place, no more successful than his father had been at securing justice.

When he died on February 23, 1526, with the title of Admiral he too bequeathed to his eldest son, Don Luis, the same measure of royal ingratitude and injustice which he had inherited from his own father, the Discoverer.

Don Luis Columbus, then a child of five, at once succeeded to the title and estates. He was living at the time with his mother in San Domingo, where he had been born. His life-story is not a pleasant one. We need only touch on it here in passing. His marriage entanglements culminated in his banishment to Africa, where he died in exile at Oran, on February 3, 1572.

In 1529, when he was eight years of age, his mother, Doña Maria de Toledo, left him in San Domingo, and went to Spain to protect his interests. That the government of Hispaniola was, nominally at least, in his name, is shown from the fact that, when Charles V sent Francisco de Barrio to end the war against the native chief Enriques in 1532, he addressed the credentials of his envoy to Don

Luis Colon, as we shall hereafter know the young Admiral.[20]

In the Majorat, determining the right of succession to all his titles, signed and sealed February 22, 1498, and solemnly confirmed by both King and Queen in the presence of witnesses on September 28, 1501, Columbus, the First Admiral, expressly set it down: "And this shall be with the conditions which I will give here below; which are to be understood as applying to my son Don Diego, as well as to each one of the aforesaid persons, or to whomever may succeed, each one of them, which conditions they shall fulfill; and not fulfilling them, in such case they shall be deprived of the said Majorat, and the person nearest of kin to such a person in whose possession it was proscribed because of not having fulfilled what I say here, shall have it; which person failing to fulfil said conditions shall be deprived of it, and another person the nearest of my lineage shall have it, provided he keeps the said conditions, which in this manner shall endure perpetually and shall be in the form above written." [21]

In the Testament and Codicil of May 19, 1506, Columbus added: "And I direct the said Don

[20] Charlevoix, *l.c.*, Vol. I, p. 462.
[21] Cfr. Thacher, *l.c.*, Vol. III, p. 648.

Diego, my son, not to think or presume to change the said Majorat, except to increase and add to it." [22] And Don Diego, in his turn, in his own last will, dated May 2, 1523, in Item XVII, takes care to pass on the injunction: "I direct and require Don Luis Colon, my son, and the successor of this house, to read frequently the testament of the Admiral, my Lord, and my own, and to take care to fulfil what is contained in them, particularly in regard to the special obligations, which are, not to diminish the said Majorat in anything, etc." [23]

Could human prudence have done more to safeguard the inheritance of the First Admiral? And yet, weary with the long litigation, and discouraged by the patent purpose of the Crown, that justice should never be done, Don Luis and his mother, Doña Maria de Toledo, finally accepted the compromise offered them, and sacrificed the Majorat and all it represented.

On January 28, 1536, the Council of the Indies had published their decision as regards the claims of the heirs of Columbus, the Discoverer. This decision was revamped on July 7th, and finally confirmed by the Emperor Charles V on September 8, 1536. In accordance with the verdict of the

[22] Cfr. Thacher, *l.c.*, Vol. III, p. 658.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 682.

Council, the heirs yielded much that had been guaranteed by the original Articles of Capitulation, but notably the title of Viceroy, the arrears already due them and for the future the promised tenth-part of the gross receipts of the Indies.

Under guise of compensation for this loss of title and revenue, Don Luis Colon y Toledo, the heir at law, while retaining the title of Admiral of the Indies, was in the first place to acquire new titles in lieu of the lost Vice-Royalty. He was to be created, at his own choice, either Duke or Marquis of Jamaica, or Duke or Marquis of Veragua, and the titles were to be hereditary for all time. He and his successors were further to possess in fief the Island of Jamaica with a manorial domain in Veragua. They were moreover, to receive in perpetuity an annual income of ten thousand ducats, to be drawn from the revenues of the Island of Hispaniola.

As Don Luis was a mere lad of fifteen, the actual selection of the titles was made in all probability by his mother, Doña Maria de Toledo, who had effected the compromise in his name. Henceforth the heir of Don Christopher Columbus, High Admiral of the Ocean-sea, Viceroy and Governor of the Indies and the Continental Land,

and Captain-General of the Ocean,[24] was to be known as Duke of Veragua and Marquis of Jamaica.

On August 21, 1536, a letter signed in the name of the mad Queen Joanna (*La Folle Juana*), and addressed to the Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica, announced that the island had been conferred on the Admiral Don Luis Colon "with its civil and criminal jurisdiction, *mero mixto imperio,* with all the taxes and profits, mines and mining, gold and silver, lands and pastures and other things whatsoever that we may have and may belong to us in the said island, supreme jurisdiction remaining to us and nothing else. Therefore I command you that from the day you may be notified with this my royal order, you will no longer exercise your office and will deliver that island to the person or persons that the said Doña Maria de Toledo, vice-reine of the Indies, in the name of the said Don Luis Colon shall send or appoint." [25]

Three years later, Don Luis, now Marquis of Jamaica, received the royal concession that the gold and silver extracted in Jamaica should be marked with "Our Royal Arms of the Crown of Castile and Leon, namely castles and lions, and

[24] These titles were incorporated in the Royal Confirmation of the Majorat. Cfr. Thacher, *l.c.*, Vol. III, p. 655.
[25] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 12.

around the escutcheon you may place a sign that you, the said Admiral, may desire." [26]

In 1540, Don Luis was appointed Captain-General, and the active administration of affairs devolved upon him. Though but nineteen years of ago, he was already showing the moral decadence that was to prove his ruin. Doña Maria de Toledo died on May 11, 1549, thus removing the last restraint on the dissolute Don Luis, who, two years later, abandoned his possessions in the New World, to squander his remaining years of life at Court and ultimate disgrace. There is not the slightest indication that he ever so much as set foot on the island of Jamaica. His income was drawn from the revenues of San Domingo.

It was in 1551 that the Third Admiral returned to Spain, and five years later, Philip, the son of the Emperor Charles V, and Regent in Spain for his father, having deprived Don Luis of his fief of Veragua, in Letters Patent dated September 26, 1556, conferred upon him the title of Duke of La Vega, and increased his annual income by seven thousand ducats. La Vega, the present Spanishtown, as already noted, was founded in 1534, and in course of time became known to the early Eng-

[26] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 13.

lish settlers after the occupation of the Island in 1655, as San Jago de la Vega.

Here, then, we have the origin of the two titles, Marquis of Jamaica and Duke of La Vega, that through many vicissitudes and prolonged lawsuits have endured to our own day, though now they are nothing more than a name, and for many years have not directly yielded a farthing of revenue to their possessors.

Luis Colon y Toledo, by his scandalous life, showed himself unworthy of the name he bore, and died in exile at Oran, on the North Coast of Africa, February 3, 1572. He left no male heir, and of his daughters Maria Colon y Mosquera became a nun, while Felipa married her cousin Diego Colon y Pravia, who became the Fourth Admiral, and incidentally the Second Duke of La Vega and Marquis of Jamaica. His father, Don Christoval, was the younger brother of Don Luis Colon y Toledo, the Third Admiral. Before his marriage, his future wife and her sister had questioned his legitimacy and consequently his right to the succession, but his marriage happily united the claims of both families. However, he did not enjoy his distinctions long, as he died in November, 1583, without legitimate issue.

After protracted legal proceedings to determine the right of succession, the Council of the Indies awarded the decision to the descendants of Isabella, the fourth daughter of Don Diego, the Second Admiral. The titles were thereupon vested in her grandson, Nuno de Portugal y Cordova, the son of Alvaro de Portugal y Colon. An elder brother of Nuno had died in 1589, before the heir had been juridically established.

In the meantime, conditions in Jamaica had been going from bad to worse. The almost entire absence of gold in the island had tended to divert adventurers to Mexico, Central America and Peru. The Isle of Springs had become little more than a supply station for the mainland.

Francisco Marques de Villalobos, Abbot of Jamaica, writing to the King on November 8, 1582, shortly after his arrival in his Abbacy, paints a rather somber picture of conditions there. "As his most mighty Majesty the Emperor Charles the Fifth, of glorious memory, who is with our Lord in heaven, gave this island to the Admirals of these parts and they are so exhausted by lawsuits and other troubles, they have not improved one inch of land in it. The governors have not visited nor governed for the term that was right and proper, thus helping these poor people and the great poverty in

which they live, but rather, have called upon them to attend to their needs and in every way ill-treated the inhabitants. If the latter wish to go and seek redress from the Royal Audiencia of San Domingo, they will not give them process or even certified papers, and if they send letters and other papers they seize them, so that no letter goes to San Domingo, nor do any come that they do not take, and the worst is that they interfere in ecclesiastical jurisdiction, abusing the priests and prelates because they reprove their effrontery. When the Governor has become rich, the Admiral sends another creature as Governor to take the accounts from him, which he does entirely to the Governor's liking, and publicly shows himself very friendly to him. Knowing this, the poor inhabitants do not venture to demand their rights." According to his account, La Vega contained only about one hundred land-owners or citizens.[27]

On October 16, 1596, the King appointed Fernando Melgarejo de Cordova as Governor of the Island of Jamaica in the state of Veragua for six years "or more if it should be my will," which would indicate that the continued lawsuits about the inheritance of the titles of the Admiral, had thrown Jamaica for the time being at least back under royal control.[28] In this same year, 1596,

[27] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 15. [28] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

we are assured that the Island of Jamaica had one hundred and twenty Spanish inhabitants, "very respectable people." [29]

This was probably the low ebb of Jamaica's Colonial history, and we can easily understand, how, almost without a struggle, it fell a prey to Sir Anthony Shirley, in 1597, who, as Leslie relates, "met with such a poor resistance that with little or no danger he plundered the Island, burnt St. Jago [La Vega], and was, while he stayed, absolute master of the whole." [30]

In August, 1603, "at the request of the Colon family, who were dissatisfied with the Governor's appointments, the King appointed a Receiver of Revenues for the Colony.[31] Another proof that the control of the Island had temporarily passed from the Colon family. Again in March, 1606, the Chamber of the Indies submitted four names for the Governorship, and the King selected Alonzo de Miranda.[32]

A new Abbot of Jamaica, following instructions given him before setting out from Spain, reports on the conditions in the Island in July, 1611. He refers to his charge as "This Island of Jamaica, that now belongs to the estate of the Admirals of

[29] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 18.
[30] James Leslie, New History of Jamaica. London: 1740, p. 57.
[31] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 28. [32] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

the Indies." As he states: "The Admiral of the Indies places a Governor here and a Lieutenant who holds the courts of first instance with the ordinary alcaldes," one might safely conclude that jurisdiction in the Island had again reverted to the heirs of Columbus.[33]

Nuno de Portugal y Cordova, who, as we have seen, was awarded, after long litigation, the right to the Jamaica titles, was created Knight of Alcantara by Philip II. He died at Madrid on March 9, 1622, and was succeeded by his son Alvaro-Jacinto de Portugal y la Bastida. In June, 1631, we find him appointing Juan Martinez de Arana as Governor of Jamaica. His right to exercise this power is eventually acknowledged by the King, who in July of the following year notifies the Chamber of Commerce of Seville of the appointment, and gives permission to Arana to sail in the galleons.[34] However, as more than a year had passed between the appointment and the royal sanction, there are evident grounds for suspecting serious reluctance on the part of the Crown to permit this exercise of independence by the Colon heir. In any case, four years later, that is in September, 1635, the Audiencia of San Domingo was instructed to "report as concisely as possible and secretly,

[33] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 34. [34] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

what benefits the Duke of Veragua has in the Island of Jamaica, and what expenses he has there, and if it is advisable for His Majesty to take it, and if he does so, whether any benefit will be derived and in what it will consist." [35]

The reply from the Audiencia was received in 1638. It indicates that the Duke's income from the Island must be something over two thousand pesos annually. As regards the main point of inquiry, the Audiencia has been quick to take its cue. "As to whether it will suit Your Majesty to take the Island, this Audiencia is of opinion that it will, because it is a large island with a great supply of provisions, and is to windward of the indispensable passage for New Spain." [36]

It is hard to conjecture, what effect this report would have produced, had it not found the Crown engrossed with weightier cares than the dispossessing of the heir of Columbus of the Isle of Springs. Shortly after the despatch of the secret inquiry, the Thirty Years' War broke out. Incidentally the Marquis of Jamaica was named a Captain-General, but as he was about to set out for Flanders, he died at Lisbon on April 26, 1636.

His son Pedro Nuno I de Portugal y Castro, a

[35] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 39. [36] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

lad of seventeen years, immediately succeeded him. He was the last Duke of La Vega and Marquis of Jamaica who exercised any authority in the Island, as it was during his lifetime that Jamaica became an English possession. He was a man of considerable ability, and gained the honor of the Golden Fleece. As Commander of the Marines in the Low Countries, at the siege of Larida he especially distinguished himself. Whatever his interest in his distant fief may have been, the wars at home entirely engrossed his attention.

In August, 1640, Francesco Ladron de Zegama, "aged thirty-eight years, of medium build, black hair and wanting an upper tooth," was appointed Governor. By whom, it is not clear. His tenure of office was marked by serious disturbances.[37]

In March, 1643, Jackson the Buccaneer, in the employ of the Earl of Warwick, recruited at Barbadoes and St. Kitts, an expedition against Jamaica, and with three ships he bore down on the practically defenseless island. According to Bryan Edwards, "It is said, however, on this occasion the inhabitants behaved with great gallantry, in a pitched battle at Passage Fort; but being overpowered, Jackson, after losing forty men, entered St. Jago de la Vega sword in hand, and, having pillaged it

[37] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 40.

of everything valuable, received a considerable ransom for sparing the houses. He then retreated to his ships, and carried off his booty without interruption." [38]

Just whether the Governor was guilty of any misconduct, or possibly held in a way responsible for the failure at defense, it is hard to say, but we find it recorded that seven months later, he "died a prisoner without guards in his own house about the month of October, sixteen hundred and forty-three." [39]

Pedro Caballero was appointed Governor by the Marquis of Jamaica in the summer of 1646. He is described as "aged twenty-eight years, of a medium build, black beard and hair, and slightly freckled face." [40] He would appear to have been of a very irascible temper, and his power of vituperation as well as his general behaviour ill became the position he held.

With the arrival of his successor in office, Jacinto Sedeno y Albornoz, May 2, 1649, a general turmoil broke out. The Abbot of Jamaica and the former Governor had previously seriously disagreed "over the question of a hanging bed in the church for the Baptism of one of the governor's

[38] Bryan Edwards, History of Jamaica, Vol. I, p. 136.
[39] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 40. [40] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

sons, which the Abbot objected to having next to the high altar." [41] The Governor's animadversions on this occasion were far from complimentary. The Abbot naturally now becomes a warm partisan of the new Governor.

Deprived of office, Caballero has recourse to mob rule. The entire town is divided into two hostile factions, Caballeristas and Sedenistas.

Gubernatorial fines and Abbatial excommunications follow the sequestration of documents and the violent handling of the Vicar General, and Pedro Caballero, ex-Governor of Jamaica, is hard put, to maintain his position in the community. The whole is most melodramatic in its setting. The climax comes on New Year's Day, 1650, with Caballero as usual the center of disturbance. A negro servant comes running to Sedeno, the new Governor, crying out that Caballero has gone to kill the Abbot. The new Governor rushes to the rescue. The Abbot is locked in his oratory. The Governors, old and new, encounter. Caballero draws his sword. Sedeno uses his cane effectively. Caballero calls for confession that he is dying. The Abbot comes from sanctuary and absolves him just before he expires. The partizans of Caballero, lead on by his widow, proceed to stir up trouble.

[41] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 42.

Within six months Sedeno is seized and cast into prison. Before long the Abbot shares his fate, and together they are transported to Cartegena to languish for two long years in the common gaol, vainly demanding to be brought to trial. As five years later the Island of Jamaica was conquered by the English, if a little chilly music and a slow curtain could be furnished, this would make a tragic close to the Spanish rule in the Isle of Springs.[42] Little better than chaos reigned in the Island until the arrival of the Cromwellian soldiers.

But to return to Pedro Nuno I, Duke of La Vega and Marquis of Jamaica. Events show that he did not easily reconcile himself to the English conquest of Jamaica, and in 1661 we find him petitioning Mary Anne of Austria, Regent for her son Charles II of Spain, that some reparation might be made him for the loss he had suffered when Admiral William Penn took possession of his fief. No immediate satisfaction was obtained by the petitioner so far as is known, but on June 19, 1672, he was appointed Viceroy and Captain-General in Mexico, possibly with the hope of leading an expedition to reclaim his inheritance. However, if he had actually planned anything of the sort, his

[42] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 43.

premature death in Mexico on December 13, 1673, prevented his disclosing the fact.

Despite the loss of the fief, the titles endured, and with the death of the last-named, his son Pedro-Manuel de Portugal y la Cueva became not only Count of Gelves and Marquis of Villamizar, but also assumed the titles of Duke of La Vega and Marquis of Jamaica, together with that of Admiral of the West Indies and Duke of Veragua. In 1675 he was appointed Knight of the Golden Fleece. He was subsequently Viceroy of Gallicia and later Viceroy of Valencia, and finally in 1693 he became Viceroy of Sicily, which office he held for many years. In 1703, we find him as President of the Council of Orders, a position he continued to fill until his death at Madrid on September 10, 1710. He was even more distinguished as a man of letters and an intimate friend of the poet Calderon, the record of whose life and works he preserved for posterity.

The next Marquis of Jamaica was the son of the foregoing, Pedro Nuno II, so called to distinguish him from his grandfather Pedro Nuno I. Apparently devoid of strength of character and ambition, he nevertheless attained to high preferment in the public service of Spain, probably through the prestige of his family. He was appointed in July,

1705, as Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of France, as personal representative of the King on the occasion of the death of the Duc de Bretagne. In February, 1707, he was designated Viceroy and Captain-General of Sardinia, where the following year he was made prisoner at the siege of Chateau de Cagliari. He had become Viceroy and Captain-General of Navarre by February, 1712, and finally in November, 1726, we find him Advisor to the Council of War.

From the *Memoires* of Saint Simon, we gather a few interesting details about this same Pedro Nuno II de Portugal y Ayala. The two became acquainted at Madrid, while the Frenchman was there in 1721, as Ambassador of Philip, Duke of Orleans, in a futile endeavor to arrange an alliance through the marriage of Louis XV and the Spanish Infanta. Saint-Simon says of his friend: "He had come into France under the title, Marquis of Jamaica, with the scheme of recovering from the English the island of Jamaica of which he claimed to have been despoiled by them. A long time after my return, he came back into France for the same scheme, which he in vain followed for two long years, spite of all the Duke of Berwick or I could say to him." [43]

[43] Memoires Complets et Authentiques du Duc de Saint-Simon. Paris: 1853, Vol. XXXVI, p. 112.

While engaged in this mission in France, he fell ill, and returned to Spain about two years before his death, which occurred at Madrid on July 4, 1733. Dying without issue, the male line of the House of Portugal y Colon died with him.

The Duke of Berwick, referred to by Saint-Simon, was one of the noted characters in history. He was the son of James II of England, at the time he was Duke of York, and Arabella Churchill, sister of the great Duke of Monmouth.[44] By his marriage with the daughter of the Earl of Claricarde, he became father of James Francis Fitz-James Stuart, Count of Tinmouth, Baron of Bosworth, Duke of Liria and Grandee of Spain, who was to add to his own titles those of Duke of La Vega and Marquis of Jamaica, by his marriage with the sister of Pedro Nuno II, just mentioned above.

Strictly speaking, he never had any right to assume the titles. His wife, Caterina-Ventura de Portugal y Ayala, was an ambitious woman of strong personality. When her brother died in 1723 without legitimate issue, she immediately appropriated to herself the titles which should have descended, not to her but to her son; and then pro-

[44] Memoires du Marechal de Berwick, ecrits par lui-meme. Second edition. Paris: 1780, Vol. I, p. xvii.

ceeded to impart them to her husband, who thus became the acknowledged Duke of La Vega and Marquis of Jamaica, distinctions which he enjoyed until his death, in the year 1738.

His widow, now the Duchess of Liria, followed him to the grave two years later, and the Jamaica titles passed to her son, Jacobo-Francisco Eduardo Stuart y Portugal, and thence to her grandson, Carlos-Fernando Stuart y Silva, who as Duke of Berwick, was Court Official under Charles III. Next in order came Jacobo-Felipe Stuart y Stolberg, son of the last named. Born at Paris on February 25, 1773, he was the last of the House of Portugal y Colon y Berwick to enjoy the Jamaican titles. A suit had been pending in the courts for more than two hundred years, and in 1790 a final settlement was reached whereby the prerogative of Admiral of the Indies and all dependent titles passed to the descendants of Francisca Colon y Pravia, niece of Don Luis, the Third Admiral and First Duke of La Vega and Marquis of Jamaica, through his brother Don Christoval Colon y Toledo. With the death of her brother, Don Diego, the Fourth Admiral, on April 28, 1578, she had laid claim to the inheritance, and on reaching Spain some years later, commenced the suit that dragged on for many generations.

Mariano de Larreategui y Embrun was the head of the House when the Council of the Indies declared their decisions, the one on June 16, 1790, the other on March 10, 1793, with final confirmation of both decisions in January, 1796. With the Admiralty of the Indies the titles of Duke of La Vega and Marquis of Jamaica passed to this family, and has remained there since. However, the family is best known by the old title of Duke of Veragua.

In fact, as Saint-Simon remarks apropos of the original transfer of titles: "Philip II, in 1556, exchanged Veragua for La Vega, in the Island of Jamaica, with Louis Columbus, the son of Diego, and he clothed La Vega with the same titles and honors accorded to Veragua by the Emperor, his father. Nevertheless Louis Columbus, as well as his successors, have always taken the titles of Dukes of Veragua and La Vega, and Lords of Jamaica." [45]

At the close of the Spanish-American War, the Island of Porto Rico was formally transferred from Spain to the United States. For many years the representative of the Island in the Congress of Deputies had been Don Cristoval de Larreategui y La Cerda-Palafox, a Grandee of Spain of the first

[45] Saint-Simon, *l.c.*, p. 111.

class, who numbered among his titles, not only Duke of Veragua, but also Duke of La Vega and Marquis of Jamaica. Grandson of Mariano de Larreategui y Embrun, he had come into them through his father, Pedro Larreategui y Baquedano.

It might be interesting to note in passing, that Justin Winser, writing in 1892, after touching on the descent of Columbus' Honors, and referring to the Duke of Veragua, without however mentioning the Jamaica titles, adds: "The value of the titles is said to-day to represent about eight or ten thousand dollars, and this income is chargeable upon the revenues of Cuba and Porto Rico." [46]

The latest copy of the Official Guide of Spanish Titles shows that with the death of Don Cristobal de Larreategui y La Cerda-Palafox in 1912, his son Don Cristobal Colon y Aguilera became "Duque de Veragua, Marques de la Jamaica, Almirante y Adelantado Mayor de las Indias." The title of Duquesa de la Vega had passed to his sister, Doña Maria del Pilar Colon y Aguilera, in 1906. Thus for the first time in history, the titles of Marquis of Jamaica and Duke of La Vega are no longer vested in the same individual.

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[46] Justin Winser, Christopher Columbus and How He Received and Imparted the Spirit of Discovery. Boston: 1902, p. 528.

CHAPTER VI

HURRICANES

UNDER date of July 22, 1598, we find a letter from Jamaica addressed to the King of Spain, and signed by Fray Nicolas de Sant Thomas. He says in part: "Some time ago I advised Your Majesty how after the arrival in this Island of Don Fernando Melgarejo de Cordova, your Governor, a hurricane occurred which ruined us and almost threw to the ground this house of St. Dominic, and how on account of the extreme poverty both of the country and of this community it has not been possible to take steps to repair it, for which reason it may have to be deserted. This country receives much fruit and profit from it, as Your Majesty will learn from the letters of the Governor who, since he came, has done everything that is possible." [1]

At the time of this letter, Nuno de Portugal y Cordova was Marquis of Jamaica, and it is signifi-

[1] Cundall, Jamaica Under the Spaniards, p. 22.

cant of the condition of affairs, that the Friar addresses himself directly to the King, and it was from the King that relief came in June, 1599, in the form of a gift sent to the Governor and Abbot of Jamaica, two thousand ducats "for repairing the churches and providing vestments." [2]

Thus early, the cry of help was heard from Jamaica, after Nature had done her utmost to wreck her paradise, and that same cry has been repeated from time to time, even to our own day, when the Isle of Springs has again and again become the sport of the elements.

William Beckford, at one time a landed proprietor in Jamaica, in 1790 found himself in the Fleet Prison, as he expressed it himself, "the consequence of imprudences which I might have prevented, and of misfortunes which I could not foresee." In these uncongenial surroundings, he undertook to write *A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica.* As might be expected under the circumstances, the work has in the main little literary or historic value, but it contains a rather vivid description of the great hurricane that swept Jamaica in 1780, and which the author himself experienced at his Estate at Roaring River, not far

[2] Cundall, *l.c.*, p. 24.

from Savannah-la-Mar, the center of destruction. In part the account runs as follows:

"This destructive hurricane began by gentle and almost imperceptible degrees, between twelve and one o'clock, on the morn of the 3rd. of October, and in the year 1780. There fell, at first, a trifling rain, which continued without increase, until ten o'clock; about which time the wind arose, and the sea began to roar in a most tremendous and uncommon manner. As yet we had not any presentiment of the distress and danger which it was soon afterwards our unhappy fortune to encounter: and although between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, we saw the subordinate buildings begin to totter and fall around us; yet we did not think it necessary to provide, at that time, for our present or future safety. We now observed, with some emotion and concern, a poor pigeon endeavour, with fruitless struggle, to regain its nest: it fluttered long in the air; and was so weakened at last, that it was driven away by the wind, and in almost a moment was carried entirely out of sight. . . .

"From the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon, the wind continued to blow with increasing violence from the north and east: but from that time, having collected all its powers of devastation, it rushed with irresistible violence from the south;

and in about an hour and a half after that period, so general and persevering was its accumulated effects, that it scarcely left a plantain-tree, a cane, or a building uninjured in the parish. At about four o'clock, we found it impossible to secure the house against the increasing impetuosity of the wind, which began to displace shingles, uplift the roof, to force the windows, and to gain an entrance on every side: and its hasty destruction but too fully proved how soon and how universally it succeeded! We were now driven from the apartments above, to take shelter in the rooms below; and there we were followed by fresh dangers, and stupified by fresh alarms. The demon of destruction was wafted in the winds, and not a corner could escape its malignant devastation. While we were looking with apprehension and terror around us, the roof, rafters, plates, and walls of six apartments, fell in, and immediately above our heads: and the horrid crash of glasses, furniture, and floors, occasioned a noise and uproar, that may be more easily felt, than the weakness of my pen can possibly describe. . . .

"It will be difficult to conceive a situation more terrible than what my house afforded from four o'clock in the afternoon until six o'clock the ensuing morning. Driven, as we were, from room to

room, while the roofs, the floors, and the walls, were tumbling over head, or falling around us; the wind blowing with a noise and violence that cannot even be reflected upon without alarm; the rain pouring down in torrents; and the night which seemed to fall, as it were in a moment, uncommonly dark, and the gloom of which we had not a single ray to enliven, and the length of which we had not either spirits or resolution, by conversation, to cheer. . . .

"The morning of the 4th. October presented us with a prospect, dreary beyond description, and almost melancholy beyond example; and deformed with such blasted signs of nakedness and ruin, as calamity, in its most awful and destructive moments, has seldom offered to the desponding observations of mankind. The face of the country seemed to be entirely changed: the valleys and plains, the mountains and the forests, that were only the day before most beautifully clothed with every verdure, were now despoiled of every charm; and to an expected abundance and superfluity of gain, in a few hours succeeded sterility and want; and every prospect, as far as the eye could stretch, was visibly stricken blank with desolation and with horror. The powers of vegetation appeared to be at once suspended; and instead of Nature and her

works, the mind was petrified by the seeming approach of fate and chaos. . . . The trees were uprooted, the dwellings destroyed; and in some places, not a stone was left to indicate the use to which it was once applied. Those who had houses, could hardly distinguish their ruins; and the proprietor knew not where to fix the situation of his former possessions. The very beasts of all descriptions, were conscious of the calamity: the birds, particularly the domestic pigeons, were most of them destroyed; and the fish were driven from those rivers, and those seas, of which they had before been the peaceful inhabitants. New streams arose, and extensive lakes were spread, where rills were scarcely seen to trickle before; and ferry-boats were obliged to ply, where carriages were used to travel with safety and convenience. The roads were for a long time impassable among the mountains: the low-lands were overflowed, and numbers of cattle were carried away by the depth and impetuosity of the torrents; while the boundaries of the different plantations were sunk beneath the accumulated pressure of the inundation.

"To give you at once a more general idea of this tremendous hurricane, I shall observe, that not a single house was left undamaged in the parish; not a single set of works, trash-house, or other sub-

ordinate building, that was not greatly injured, or entirely destroyed. Not a single wharf, storehouse, or shed, for the deposit of goods, was left standing: they were all swept away at once by the billows of the sea; and hardly left behind the traces of their foundations. The negro houses were, and I believe without a single exception, blown down. . . . Hardly a tree, a shrub, a vegetable, or a blade of grass an inch long, was to be seen standing up and uninjured, the ensuing morning; nay, the very bark was whipt from the log-wood hedges, as they lay upon the ground; and the whole prospect had the appearance of a desert, over which the burning winds of Africa had lately passed.

"At Savannah-la-Mar, there was not even a vestige of a town, the parts only of two or three houses having in partial ruin remained, as if to indicate the situation and extent of the calamity: the very materials of which it had been composed, had been carried away by the resistless fury of the waves, which finally completed what the wind began. A very great proportion of the poor inhabitants were crushed to death, or drowned: and in one house alone, it was computed that forty, out of one and forty souls, unhappily and prematurely perished. The sea drove with progressive violence for more than a mile into the country; and carried terror,

as it left destruction, wherever it passed. Two large ships and a schooner were at anchor in the bay, but were driven a considerable distance from the shore, and totally wrecked among the mango-trees on land. . . .

"To this calamity, another unfortunately succeeded; and the consequences of which were still more fatal to the lives of those who had survived the storm. The stench that arose from the putrefaction of the dead bodies, which remained for many weeks without interment, and to numbers of which the rites of burial could not be administered, occasioned a kind of pestilence, that swept away a great proportion of those who had providentially escaped the first destruction. Almost every person in the town and neighborhood was affected; and the faculty was rendered incapable, through sickness, to attend their patients, many of whom perished from the inclemency of the weather, from want of attendance, or supply of food." [3]

Such is Beckford's description of what, until recent times, was commonly described as "the most terrible hurricane which ever spread death and destruction even in the West Indies." [4]

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[3] William Beckford, A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica. London: 1790, Vol. I, p. 91 *seq.*

[4] Gardner, History of Jamaica, p. 148.

However, it was not the first, nor yet the last cyclonic tempest to work sad havoc over the entire western end of the Island of Jamaica. Speaking of the fate of Savannah-la-Mar in the hurricane of 1744, Bryan Edwards writes: "The sea bursting its ancient limits overwhelmed that unhappy town and swept it to instant destruction, leaving not a vestige of man, beast, or habitation behind. So sudden and comprehensive was the stroke, that I think the catastrophe of Savannah-la-Mar was even more terrible, in many respects, than that of Port Royal." [5]

The word "hurricane" itself owes its derivation to the Carib Indians of the Lesser Antilles. It was probably their primitive attempt to imitate that peculiar puffing, coughing sound that the wind has on these occasions. The earliest Spanish Adventurers, on encountering these violent tropical cyclones, heard the Caribs call them by a name which they variously attempted to reproduce in the Spanish tongue. Las Casas rendered it as *Huracan.*[6] Oviedo seemed to hesitate, as he assures us that "When the Devil wished to fill the natives with fear, he threatened to send them a great tempest which they call *Furacan* or *Hauracan*, and are so vehement that they overthrow many houses and

[5] Handbook of Jamaica. London: 1900, p. 384.
[6] Cfr. Thacher, Christopher Columbus, Vol. II, p. 356.

great trees."[7] While Peter Martyr, the future Abbot of Jamaica, gave as a Latin rendition of the word, *Furacanes.* He is speaking of the return of Columbus from his second voyage, when he tells us that "In the month of June, of the same year, they say there arose a boisterous tempest of wind from the southwest, that almost passes belief. The violence was so great that it plucked up by the roots the greatest trees in its path. When this whirlwind reached the harbor of the city, it entirely swamped three ships that lay at anchor there, breaking their cables asunder. And what is most remarkable is the fact that it did this while the sea was comparatively calm, by merely twisting them around three or four times. Moreover, the inhabitants assert that at the same time the sea rushed inland and rose higher by a full cubit, than it ever had before, within the memory of man."[8] He goes on to say that the Natives attributed the increase in the frequency and the violence of these cyclones to the advent of the Spaniards and adds: "These tempests of the air which the Greeks called Typhoons, they call Furacans."[9]

The causes of these tropical cyclones have been

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[7] Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdez, The Natural History of the West Indies. Cfr. Eden Translation No. 183.

[8] Peter Martyr, The Decades of the New World or West Indies. Cfr. Eden Translation No. 21.

[9] "Has æris procellas uti Græci tiphones furacanes uti appelant."

variously conjectured, and whatever the true scientific explanation of the phenomena may be, this much seems certain, that they have their origin in that part of the ocean near the Equator, that is remarkable for its calms and baffling winds, and is known in the language of the sea as the Doldrums.

The steady winds, north and south of this region, are called the Trades. The Northern Trades blow from the northeast, and the Southern Trades are usually from the southeast. However, as Charles L. Mitchell, in a most scholarly treatment of the subject shows,[10] about the month of August, the extreme end of the Atlantic Doldrums is apt to shift farther to the north, and the deflective force of the earth's rotation then causes the Southern Trades, that have been blowing from the southeast, to shift to a southwesterly direction.

When this happens, there exists over the ocean, to the south of the Cape Verde Islands, off the Western Coast of Africa, a calm area, with strong steady winds north and south of it, blowing in diametrically opposite directions. This would seem to set up a mighty column of air revolving rapidly around a center, and possibly as a consequence of centrifugal force, the air therein becomes

[10] Charles L. Mitchell, West Indian Hurricanes and other Tropical Cyclones of the North Atlantic Ocean. (U. S. Month. W. Rev. Sup. 24) Washington: 1924.

rarefied, and tends with an upward suction to draw in the heavier air from without the whirling mass and at the base of the column.

Now, just as water drawn by suction through a pipe from the bottom of a basin, is seen to spin round rapidly in a spiral, leaving a hole at the center of the escaping water, so with this whirling upward flow of air, drawn by the suction of the rarefaction of the upper strata, there remains a central calm space, that acts as an axis of the entire system, while the immediate air around it is given a greater rotary impulse. This tendency, in turn, increases the rarefaction, and so each force only tends to accentuate and augment the other, until the whirling volume of air attains a velocity of over sixty miles an hour, when the disturbance becomes classed as a hurricane.

It further happens at this particular season of the year, that the Northern Trades, blowing from the northeast, are of much greater intensity than are the winds south of the storm center, which are blowing from the southwest. The resolution of forces, then, would tend to set the entire system moving in a westerly direction. This drift is further accelerated perhaps by the earth's revolution on its axis, with a resultant tendency on the part of this great spiral column of air to drag.

We now have a hurricane well started on its way across the Atlantic Ocean, gathering new strength as it goes, until it crosses something that may tend to deflect its course, or possibly disarrange the forces that are continually whipping it on, namely the Trade Winds north and south of it.

However, it should be noted, that not all the storms, by any means, originate south of the Cape Verde Islands. For what occurs there, may happen anywhere along the region of the Doldrums, when like conditions prevail.

Thus, at times, the eastern end of the Pacific Doldrums, that is as a rule located south of Panama, extends itself across the Isthmus into the Caribbean Sea. This would seem to be the cause of many of the Autumnal Hurricanes, which originate in this area, and which, instead of proceeding in a westerly direction, are quickly deflected to the northward by the climatic conditions over the continent at the time.

As regards the Hurricane Season, the Jamaican peasant will tell you: "June: Too soon! July: Stand by! August: Beware you must! September: Remember! October: All ober!" Practically, this means, that there is but little reason for anxiety during the month of June, and as a matter of fact the storm centers of that month very seldom de-

velop into anything like a hurricane. During July, also, severe tropical storms are rare, but the probability of their attaining a wind velocity of sixty miles an hour, which is required to constitute them as hurricanes, is much greater. Hence the advice for July, "Stand by!"

"August: Beware you must!" For it is in this month that the real Hurricane Season begins. Mr. Mitchell, in his carefully prepared charts that cover a period of thirty-seven years, shows that in August the tropical disturbances are of frequent occurrence, and that they very commonly attain cyclonic strength. In August, too, you are more apt to have the typical Hurricane form to the south of the Cape Verde Islands, pass completely across the Atlantic Ocean, only to enter the Caribbean Sea almost on a line with the Island of Cuba. Those that pass south of Cuba usually dissipate themselves in Central America without recurving, while those that pass north of the Island as a rule recurve to the east off the coast of Florida.

The height of the Hurricane Season is during August and the first two weeks of September. During this period of six weeks have originated more than one-half of all the hurricanes in the Atlantic during the past forty years. And, as Mr. Mitchell takes care to note further in August, 1893, there

were four distinct hurricanes at one and the same time, and in September, 1900, there were three simultaneous hurricanes, one of which wrought such havoc at Galveston, Texas. Well, then, may the rhyme warn us: "September: Remember!"

With the middle of September, however, there is a notable decrease both in frequency of tropical storms, and in the percentage of those that reach hurricane intensity. After this respite, with the beginning of October, without any apparent reason, there is another period of maximum frequency of these severe storms for a fortnight. But after the middle of October, the decline of the Hurricane Season sets in rapidly, and theoretically at least, all danger is passed by the end of the month. Or, as the Jamaican peasant expresses it. "October: All ober!"

In the thirty-seven years that Mr. Mitchell has checked up with minute care, he shows that there were only two storms of known hurricane intensity in the month of November, and one of these was the exceptionally severe hurricane which passed slowly over the western part of Jamaica in 1912, and which he declares was "undoubtedly one of the most violent, if not the most violent, that ever struck the Island." [11]

[11] Mitchell, *l.c.*, p. 46.

WATER SPOUTS — FANTASTIC CONCEPTION
Taken from "Gentlemen's Magazine," Dec., 1783

New Church

Church Destroyed by Hurricane

New Church

Working in Jam Patch

Under date of November 30, 1912, a missionary wrote from Black River, Jamaica, as follows:[12] "During the past year an almost unbroken drought has been causing much suffering in Jamaica. In some sections, vegetation has withered away, numbers of cattle have died from thirst, while even the people of the afflicted districts, poverty-stricken and half-famished, may be seen frequenting the neighboring towns and villages to 'beg y'u jus' one farding.'

"Here in Black River, on the weekly market-day, I have met crowds of these unfortunates flocking down from the Pedro Plains, where the suffering has been most acute; gaunt, emaciated women, bearing on their hips mere skeletons of babies, that cling like little monkeys to the tattering shreds of the mother's dress; cadaverous men, their deep-sunken eyes glistening with the unnatural light of fever; wasted children with ragged shirts scarcely covering their nakedness.

"A series of showers last month gave some relief, but it was reserved for the present month to bring almost an excess of a good thing. I was in Montego Bay on the evening of the new moon, which was ushered in by a real tropical downpour. It was then that a child of the 'bush,' commenting

[12] America, Dec. 21, 1912, p. 250.

on the generous ablutions of our crescent friend, forecasted heavy rains, or as he expressed it, 'New moon wash him face—hab plenty water.'

"Judging by results, the new moon must have made a thorough job of it. How it did rain? For more than a month there was scarcely any cessation. Here in the tropics when it rains there is no loss of time about it. You notice no succession of drops, but a solid sheet of water that descends in unbroken torrents.

"The streets became running rivers, at times many inches deep. No one seemed to mind this, the only remark being, 'Wait, gully him soon come down.' Just to the east of the business section of the town and crossing the main thoroughfare is a dried-up watercourse, or gully, that serves as an outlet for the inland water-shed back of the town. In the heaviest rains I had never seen more than a few inches of flow along this channel, but from the beginning of the recent downpour all eyes were kept fixed on this gully, concerning which I had heard wild stories of midnight inundations, with houses swept to sea, etc., etc.

"It was Saturday afternoon about 3:30, when, above the beating of the rain and the roar of the wind, I heard a strange rumble back in the hills. Others heard it, too, for instantly a cry of warning

was raised in the town, and as all scrambled away to give the onrushing torrent a wide berth, 'Gully, him certainly did come down!' It was like the breaking of a dam. No sudden rise of a river, but a solid wall of water tumbling down from the hills with irresistible force and bearing with it whatever stood in its path. In the present instance little real damage was done, as all were prepared for it. Still, I saw in that mad swirl tumbling out to sea a strong colt, a burro or two, several pigs, fowls, etc. Small boats put out to the rescue, but the sharks were beforehand and claimed their prey.

"Houses along the side of the gully were flooded, and for a time more than one was in actual danger. As the torrent reached the sea, it ripped out the giant breakwater, and in less time than it takes to tell it a deep bed had been cut out for it, and the waves from the ocean beat up in mad fury against the onrushing flood. It was assuredly a wild sight."

Eliot, in his *Handbook of Cyclonic Storms in the Bay of Bengal* states: "Whatever the causes and origin of cyclones may be, the history of all cyclones in the Bay of Bengal shows that they are invariably preceded for longer or shorter periods by unsettled, squally weather, and that during this period the air over a considerable portion of the bay is gradually given a rapid rotary motion about

a definite center. During the preliminary period of change from slightly unsettled and threatening weather to the formation of a storm, more or less dangerous to shipping, one of the most important and striking points is the increase in the number and strength of the squalls, which are an invariable feature in cyclonic storms from the very earliest stages. First of all, the squalls are comparatively light and are separated by longish intervals of fine weather and light variable or steady winds, according to the time of year. They become more frequent and come down more fiercely and strongly with the gradual development of the storm." [13] The same condition seems to prevail in the case of the West Indian Cyclones.

The Jamaica Hurricane of 1912 developed north of the Isthmus of Panama, and was first detected on November 11th, with the center about one hundred miles almost due north from the Canal. For two days it moved northwesterly and then curved to the north and northeast, advancing more slowly each day until it reached Jamaica on the 18th. Meanwhile, the western end of the Island was swept by squalls of increasing intensity and at shorter intervals. The sun would be shining brightly,

[13] J. Eliot, Handbook of Cyclonic Storms in the Bay of Bengal. Calcutta: 1900.

when suddenly a mass of clouds would sweep out of the southwest and a perfect deluge of rain with fierce gusts of wind would last for a half hour or so, and then the squall would disappear as abruptly as it had come, leaving the tropical sun blazing down in all its intensity, for a spell, only to give way before another sudden onrush of storm clouds.

As early as Friday, November 15th, there was a noticeable increase in the heights of the tides, and as the week advanced, this was daily more and more in evidence.[14] So, too, were the long heavy swells that rolled in from the ocean and came beating against the shore or shattered themselves along the coral reefs in a wild mass of seething foam and high-tossed spray.

By Sunday, the falling barometer became something alarming, and the S.S. "Prinz Sigismund" of the Hamburg-American Line, that had been lying in the roadstead off Montego Bay and loading from the small boats that brought the freight from the shore about 5:30 P.M. hurriedly cut loose from the clustering craft around her, and leaving the freight half-loaded, put to sea for safety.

It was that same Sunday night, the 17th of November, that the real storm reached Jamaica.

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[14] For Hurricane Effect on the Tides, Cfr. I. M. Cline, U. S. Monthly Weather Review, March, 1920.

It was advancing at the slow rate of four miles an hour, and the center of disturbance passed Negril Point at 5:30 on the morning of the 18th, reaching Montego Bay about seven hours later.

The crest of the high water that is swept on before a hurricane like a miniature tidal wave, or rather series of such waves, occurs a few miles to the right and about the time of the passage of the storm-center. Savannah-la-Mar, or as it is usually called to-day, Savlamar, situated on the southwestern coast of the Island, was just in position to receive the full force of the onrush of the ocean, and even as it was inundated in the two previous hurricanes of 1744 and 1780, so now once more the sea swept inland for more than a mile and literally wiped out the town, and left the hulk of a large schooner right in the middle of the public market.

In Montego Bay itself, Sunday night was a wild one. The wind from the southwest came in fitful gusts, and by morning fences were for the most part laid flat, outbuildings had collapsed, and trees generally had been uprooted or snapped off like reeds. Throughout the morning the violence increased from hour to hour. A single gust of wind would whip the zinc from an entire roof, and the mass of metal sheets would sweep upward, and seem to pause for the briefest instant, then spread

out fan-like, only to be tossed hither and thither in the air like leaves, many of them being carried directly out to sea, while others would come diving down to earth with great danger to life and property.

In the harbor, the drogers, fourteen in number, and all little sloops of from ten to twenty tons displacement, had been drawn as close to the shelter of the shore as their draft would permit. Every available anchor was placed for their protection, but before noon, one by one they disappeared, either breaking adrift to be immediately engulfed by the seething waves off shore, or actually forced down beneath the surface of the water by the sheer force of the wind, when the anchors and hawsers stood the strain.

The official wind gauges at Negril had registered a velocity of 120 miles an hour, when they were swept away, and the hurricane had not yet by any means reached its height.

It was a weird sight, to be watching a house of solid construction, seemingly as firm as the rock on which it rested, when of a sudden with an explosive clap that could be heard above the storm, it would disintegrate, roof, walls and all, and be strewn in débris across the fields. The wind in all its violence was not a steady pressure. The booming gusts, like

distant guns, at times almost synchronous as a pendulum, would set the entire structure swaying until it wrenched it from its foundations, or forced a crevice at plate or corner, when the inrush through the opening would wreck the building and rip it piece from piece.

During the course of Monday morning, at Montego Bay the rains stopped for a time, while the wind continued in unabated fury until shortly after noon, when it gradually sank to rest without any noticeable change of direction. As in a hurricane the air is swirling around the central calm or axis of the disturbance while the entire system is steadily advancing, should the observer be standing to one side of the path of this center, he will notice that the wind changes completely in its direction without any material break in the storm. But should he, on the other hand, be on the direct path of the center of disturbance, as this central calm reaches him, the wind will die away, only to spring up again from a diametrically opposite direction, for what is known as the "back blow," as soon as the central calm has passed beyond where he is stationed.

This is exactly what happened at Montego Bay. A little after three o'clock there began a breathless calm, that lasted for about three hours. It was a strange hush, ominous of approaching disaster, for

the wind had sunk away without any change of direction. The unnatural stillness was marred only by an occasional drizzle and the thunder of the surge of the ocean, that now almost made the ground tremble. The vortex of the storm was passing overhead, and the knowing ones prepared for the worst.

Without a warning, low-scudding clouds swept in from the north, and a perfect deluge of rain again burst forth. The wind did not immediately resume its former fury: that was to come later. For the time being, it moaned dismally, as if in anticipation of what was to follow.

Toward the hour of sunset, the sky took on a most terrible aspect. No one recalls having ever seen anything of its kind before. The heavy, yellow fog that mystified the world subsequent to the eruption of Krakatoa some thirty years before, was nothing in comparison. It was like the judgment day. The rain was coming in fretful gusts, when suddenly the observer seemed to be standing in the midst of a blazing furnace. Around the entire horizon was a ring of blood-red fire, shading away to a brilliant amber at the zenith. The sky, in fact, formed one great fiery dome of reddish light, that shone through the descending rain.

The *Northern News*, of Montego Bay, in the first

issue after the Hurricane, thus describes it: "And what a sky to behold, oh God! As we reflect on the appearance of that sky—produced from whatever cause—we fairly shudder to recall its heart-freezing hue. It was a sky that we firmly are convinced will never pass from the memory of the present generation!"

Then burst forth the hurricane afresh, and for two hours or more, no man could keep track of the hours that night, it raged and tore asunder what little had passed unscathed through the previous blow.

In addition to the gully at the eastern end of the town, that had come down in flood two days before as already related, through the very heart of the business section there flowed a little walled-in stream, known as the canal. The cloud-burst back in the mountains behind the town of a sudden turned both of these courses into raging torrents. At the canal, a solid wall of water, higher than a man as it crossed the street, shot as from the nozzle of a gigantic hose, at such a velocity that it did not seek a level, but continued unbroken to the sea, sweeping all before it. The gully, too, came down again, with a mighty roar leaping its banks, and without a moment's warning it bore out to sea row after row of houses; and despite heroic efforts at

rescue, many were the unfortunates who found a watery grave.

The very streets became rushing torrents nearly two feet in depth, and one at least who crawled on hands and knees, groping his way through the swirling mass of débris, found himself picked up by a mad freak of the wind, actually turned over in the air, and dropped back again dizzy and confused.

On many a mind the thought now forced itself that the end of the world had come, and that the general distintegration of all things was at hand. Then it was, that a sickly gleam of lightning, making a feeble attempt to pierce the dun clouds, and the faint crash of distant thunder, awakened new hope in the despondent, sinking hearts of the unfortunates who cringed in fear in every nook and shelter, or, sobbing convulsively, struggled hysterically to reach some fancied point of safety. With the first crash of thunder the peasant knows that the worst is passed.

By midnight the storm had spent its strength, having claimed a toll of nearly two hundred victims. The property loss could only be estimated in the vaguest terms, as nearly 20,000 houses were either entirely destroyed or else so badly damaged that they were scarcely habitable.

At Seaford Town, the stone church which had stood broadside to the wind, succumbed before the violence of the storm. The pressure of the full force of the hurricane caused the far foundations to crumble, and, as the walls collapsed, huge blocks of stone weighing often over a hundred pounds were snatched up by the wind and cast down the hill a hundred feet and more, while the belfry with its bell and all went hurtling through the air and came to earth more than two hundred yards from its station on the hill.

The loss of crops passed all description, as nearly one-third of the entire Island was laid waste, and such was the impetuosity of the wind that it whipped up the salt spray of the sea and swept it so far inland that the very blades of grass died down; and with the return of the sun and warmth a few days after the storm saw the entire district a desert waste, with not a green shoot in evidence except in the mass of fetid, decaying vegetation that choked the new-formed lakes and ponds, and threatened fresh dangers from sickness and pestilence.

With unsparing hand the storm had done its work and left a train of havoc in its wake, wiping out whole plantations of bananas, obliterating fields of sugar cane, laying low the cocoanut groves,

scattering like chaff the hovels of the poor, reducing to shapeless heaps of ruins the better class of dwellings, and sparing nothing in its mad fury.

Thus the Jamaican peasantry was called upon once more to mourn their loss; but such is the truly marvelous recuperative power of Nature in the tropics, that man seems to imbibe a little courage from the example of vegetation round about. Disheartened, but not yet broken in spirit, each little family shifted as best they could. A temporary shelter was quickly erected, the fields were set in order, and by degrees the wasted districts, new-clothed in verdure, with peasant homes nestling in every hollow, or clustering upon a pleasant hillside, became again the tropical paradise of before the storm.

Robert T. Hill, of the United States Geological Survey, writing toward the close of the last century, is emphatic in his statement: "The Jamaica negroes are sui generis; nothing like them, even of their own race, can elsewhere be found—not even elsewhere in the West Indies. They are omnipresent. The towns, the country highways, and the woods ring with their laughter and merry songs; they fill the churches and throng the highways, especially on market-days, when the country roads are black with them; and they are witty and full of queer stories

and folk-lore."[15] After the hurricane, then, in every heart the pain of loss was stifled by the hope of future prosperity, as the community settled down to the old routine of life, to wait the next hurricane, which with trustful confidence they prayed might not lay waste the Island, at least within their lifetime.

This touching trait of hopefulness and trust in Divine Providence is a pleasing characteristic of the Jamaican peasantry. Whatever their faults and sins may be, these shortcomings must be attributed to ignorance or human weakness. Their faith in God is strong, though frequently their lives are set at variance with His commands, and superstitious practises becloud their intellects. However, in hurricane as in earthquake, the soul for a time triumphs over flesh, and they see the hand of God in these afflictions, and with spirits chastened for the hour, they take up the burden of life anew.

It was this hopeful disposition, perhaps, that drew the remark from Lord Elgin, who, as Governor of Jamaica from 1842 to 1846, learned to appreciate the native peasantry at their true worth: "I doubt, whether any people on the face of the globe enjoy as large a share of happiness as the Creole

[15] Robert T. Hill, Cuba and Porto Rico with the other Islands of the West Indies. New York: 1898, p. 227.

peasantry of this island." [16] He is speaking of that real happiness which alone implies contentment and true peace of mind, and noticing how simple are the wants of the children of the "bush," he instances how they are on the whole sober and frugal. Truly, the light-hearted Jamaican peasant draws his inspiration from the beauties of Nature around him, and rises above the turmoil of the passing storm; and even the crudities of life are softened and in a sense atoned for, by his touching spirit of childlike confidence in the bounty and mercy of his Father in heaven.

[16] George M. Wrong, The Earl of Elgin. London: 1905, p. 19.

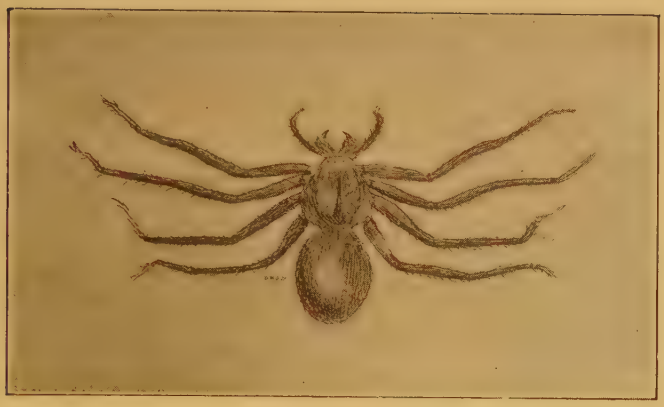
CHAPTER VII

ANANCY STORIES

FOR one who is familiar with the amusing escapades of Brer Rabbit, as told by Joel Chandler Harris in his inimitable way, the Anancy Stories of the Jamaica "bush" must inevitably hold a special charm.

This word "Anancy" originally meant a spider; as the chief character in the Tales he plays a rôle similar to that of Brer Rabbit in the Uncle Remus Stories. With Brer Rabbit, too, Anancy shows great cunning and ingenuity in circumventing his enemies and in overreaching the other animals. There is nothing ennobling in his character, however, and it would be a serious mistake to style him the hero of the Tales.

Thus far, nothing like a complete collection of the Jamaica Anancy Stories has ever been attempted. Their prototype, the Anansi Tales of West Africa, substantially the same, but differing



THE JAMAICA ANANCY SPIDER

(*Actual Size*)

Sir Hans Sloane, founder of the British Museum, thus described the central figure in Jamaica Folklore: "Araneus venatorius major pilosus, domesticus, fuscus, pedibus maculis, nigris notatis. The great House-Spider.—The upper part of the thorax of this is almost round and brown, with a yellowish circle about it, the abdomen roundish, hairy and brown, the legs with two antennae or chelae are disposed on each side of the thorax. It hath two shining black teeth, several round shining eyes, the legs more than an inch long, brown and hairy with black spots on them. This spider is near an inch in diameter, and holds as it goes along, a round bag, white and like cotton, of one third of an inch in diameter under its belly hatching its young contained in it. It is very common in all houses, running about even on their ceilings. They are not venomous, nor do they any hurt, but hunt and kill cockroaches, and therefore are carefully defended from injuries by house-keepers. I saw one of these spiders eat a small lizard called a wood-slave, which was half out and half in his mouth, and another eat a large cockroach."—Sir Hans Sloane, *The Natural History of Jamaica.* London: 1725. Vol. II, p. 185, and Tab. 235.

Banana Field After Storm—Blind Beggar—School Days

greatly in detail and local coloring, have already been edited and given to the public. Nor would it now be an easy matter to collect a detailed and authentic narrative of the adventures of Anancy in the Jamaica "bush." The black man is apt to be abashed in the presence of the bockrah massah (white master), and if the intruder is discovered while an Anancy Story is in progress, the words die on the narrator's lips, and the only answer that is vouchsafed to an urgent request to continue, is that a far-away look comes into his eyes and his usual response to every inquiry is the laconic "Me no no sah!"—"I don't know, sir!"

Why should we wonder, then, at the inaccuracy of so much that is written about the Jamaica "bush" and its Anancy Stories? The ordinary source of information is the tourist, who never even penetrates the "bush," and the happy individual who is living off the revenues of a volume or two a year of travel-sketches and who may penetrate the fringe of the "bush," but is satisfied with any matter that will help the sale of the next volume, and incidentally furnish a little added income. In addition to these itinerants, from time to time you have the so-called scientific investigator or student of folk-lore, who comes to the Island usually armed with as many preconceived notions as he, or more

probably she, has brought impedimenta, in the form of phonograph material and other paraphernalia that may give the expedition an appearance of thoroughness. These follow the ordinary tourist route through the Island, with an occasional short excursion off the beaten path. They only stop where hotels and other suitable lodgings can afford them all the comforts of home. They do not even penetrate the "bush." They have come prepared with everything to record even the intonations of the narrator's voice in song and story, and now it is only necessary to find the song or story for a suitable consideration, and it is usually some employee at the lodgings, or some chance friend of the "Lady" of the house, or perhaps even the gamins of the street, who absorb that consideration, and forthwith endeavor to furnish in return whatever will net the most financially.

What is the sum total of results? They gather up snatches of poorly disguised revival hymns; they record the adaptation of the jingle learned at school; all-unsuspecting, and consequently all-unblushing, they may watch the Minto dance, and catch in record the sensuous refrain that savors of the Hawaiian Ukulele at its best, or rather at its worst; they may even chance upon a bit of Myal song and dance. But this is not the "bush," nor

are these "bush" melodies that are carried back and duly published in attractive little volumes as Jamaica Folk-songs, "with music recorded in the field."

Even had our students ventured into the "bush" itself, far from all hotels and comfortable lodgings, even had they ingratiated themselves into the confidence of the Blacks and shared with them their hovel-life for many months, they would scarcely have been able to secure the record of a single Anancy Story or the refrain of one "bush" melody.

As a matter of fact, the beneficiary of some folk-lore foundation is usually seated comfortably on a cool verandah, of an ideal tropical evening, gazing perhaps out over the restless Caribbean or else admiring the grandeur of the mountain scenery, as the lotus-atmosphere soothes away every care and anxiety about the morrow. An assistant adjusts the record on the phonograph, if it is to be a folk-song that must be sacredly preserved for generations as yet unborn; or, possibly, if an Anancy Story is to be the hour's pleasant task, an added note-book is held in hand, with more than one pencil ready for any emergency, while expectantly they await the pleasure of the dusky maid or bright-eyed gamin who is to be the self-conscious artist of the evening.

They want a story, let us say, and have paid the price for one, at least in promise, and so a story must be forthcoming. It is probably a Jamaican rendition of some fairy tale or goblin story once learned in the country school from text-books "Made in England." A little local coloring is being added for effect, and the story must be drawn out by an active imagination to a presentable length. Or perhaps it is a "goody-goody" story of the Sunday School, with its fitting moral, that has been refurbished for the occasion. In any case, our "trained investigator," our searcher after folk-lore, who incidentally here and now may be computing the value of this story in dollars or pounds, probably returns to what he is pleased to call civilization, ready to print the last word on the whole question of Jamaica Anancy Stories.

Even experienced writers at times are easily deluded. One such makes bold to state that the "Folk lore shows evidence of English and African mixture." And as if to prove his point, continues: "Here is a story as it was told by our son's Jamaican nursemaid, without the inimitable pronunciation. 'One day a gentleman and lady have two girl. And they sent them out to look for them granny. When them got in the thick wood and them meet with an orangootang. The orangootang

axed them where are them going to. I am going to look for my granny. And said, Here is your granny. And them said, No, you is not my granny. My granny got a mark right on her mout'. And he went in the thick wood, took a knife, scrape off his mout' and come out and said, Here is your granny now. And he took dem and carry dem in his house and just half cook de food dat carry for dem granny. And when night come him eat off de middle of de biggest one and lef' only de hand and de feet. And de little one said, Granny, let I go outside. And he said go and de smallest one run home and can't talk till three days. And de father get twelve men and gone look for de orangootang, and when he going six mont' he catch de orangootang and put him in de cage and when six mont' come he throw kerosene oil on him and light him a fire.' "[1]

Strictly speaking, this is not an Anancy Story at all. As Gardner tells us:[2] "The word Anancy signifies a spider in the Creole patois, but the meaning of the word, as applied to the foremost character in this fairy mythology, is not illustrated by any reference it contains. Anancy is an inferior character, and more concerned about eating and drink-

[1] Frank, Roaming through the West Indies, p. 425.
[2] Gardner, History of Jamaica, p. 392.

ing than anything else. He has a wife named Crookie, and they have a son Tacooma. This Being, though described as much stronger, is not so cunning as his father, and disagrees with him, as Anancy also does with his wife." [3]

The real Anancy Story, then, is essentially an Animal Story. But in addition to the innumerable tales interwoven with every trait and characteristic of the animals, with friend spider as a rule more or less in evidence, there is another type of story in vogue among the Jamaican peasantry, such as the instance already cited, that is in error frequently classed with the Anancy Tales.

Many of them, too, come down in living tradition from the days in the African "bush," and form a part, if you will, of Jamaica's Folk-Lore, but they are no more to be confused with true Anancy Stories than are the fairy tales of the nursery about good little girls and fairy god-mothers to be listed under the heading of Brer Rabbit stories. They are essentially in an entirely different category, enjoying a peculiar charm of their own, but lacking that pleasing quaintness inherent in all animal Tales, whether we term them Bedtime Stories, Brer Rabbit's Experiences or simply Anancy Tales.

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[3] Cfr. John Radcliffe, Lectures on Negro Proverbs with a Preliminary Paper on Negro Literature. Kingston: 1869, Introduction.

This second class of stories are essentially Fairy Tales, as adapted to "bush" surroundings. As with elf and fairy, there is supposed to be a suprahuman agency at work, and a suitable moral is usually inculcated.

It is strange, then, to find such writers as "Monk" Lewis, who is usually so accurate in his observations, giving examples of these Fairy Tales under the caption of Anancy Stories, while a real Animal Story seldom finds its way into print. An instance or two may well illustrate the point in question. We read in Lewis' *Journal of a West India Proprietor*—"The negroes are also very fond of what they call Nancy stories, part of which is related, and part sung. The heroine of one of them is an old woman named Mammy Luna, who having left a pot boiling in her hut, found it robbed on her return. Her suspicions were divided between two children whom she found at play near her door and some negroes who had passed that way to market. The children denied the theft positively. It was necessary for the negroes in order to reach their own estate, to wade through a river at that time almost dry; and on their return, Mammy Luna, who it would seem, was not without some skill in witchcraft, warned them to take care in venturing across the stream, for that the water

would infallibly rise and carry away the person who had stolen the contents of her pot; but if the thief would but confess the offense, she engaged that no harm should happen, as she only wanted to exculpate the innocent, and not to punish the guilty. One and all denied the charge, and several crossed the river without fear or danger; but upon the approach of one woman to the bank, she was observed to hesitate. 'My neger, my neger,' said Mammy Luna, 'why you stop? me tink, you savee well, who tief me?' This accusation spirited up the woman, who instantly marched into the river, singing as she went, and the woman's part is always chanted frequently in chorus, which the negroes call, 'taking up the sing.'

'If da me eat Mammy Luna's pease-O,
Drowny me, water, drowny, drowny!'

'My neger, my neger,' cried the old woman, 'me sure now you the thief! me see the water wet you feet. Come back, my neger, come back.' Still on went the woman, and still continued her song of

'If da me eat Mammy Luna's pease, &c.'

'My neger, my neger,' repeated Mammy Luna, 'me no want punish you; my pot smell good, and you woman. Come back, my neger, come back; me

see now water above your knee!' But the woman was obstinate; she continued to sing and to advance, till she reached the middle of the river's bed, when down came a tremendous flood, swept her away, and she never was heard of more; while Mammy Luna warned the other negroes never to take the property of another; always to tell the truth; and, at least, if they should be betrayed into telling a lie, not to persist in it, otherwise they must expect to perish like their companion. Observe that a moral is always an indispensable part of a Nancy story.

"Another is as follows:—Two sisters had always lived together on the best terms; but, on the death of one of them, the other treated very harshly a little niece who had been left to her care, and made her a common drudge to herself and her daughter. One day the child having broken a water-jug, was turned out of the house and ordered not to return till she could bring back as good a one. As she was going along, weeping, she came to a large cotton-tree, under which was sitting an old woman without a head. I suppose this unexpected sight made her gaze rather earnestly, for the old woman immediately enquired—'Well, my piccaninny, what you see?' 'Oh, mammy,' answered the girl, 'me no see nothing,' 'Good child!' said again the

old woman; 'and good will come to you.' Not far distant was a cocoa-tree; and here was another old woman, without any more head than the former one. The same question was asked her, and she failed not to give the same answer which had already met with so good a reception. Still she travelled forwards, and began to feel faint through want of food, when, under a mahogany tree, she not only saw a third old woman, but one who, to her great satisfaction, had got a head between her shoulders. She stopped, and made her best courtesy—'How day, grannie!' 'How day, my piccaninny; what matter, you no look well?' 'Grannie, me lilly hungry.' 'My piccaninny, you see that hut, there's rice in the pot, take it, and yam-yamme; but if you see one black puss, mind you give him him share.' The child hastened to profit by the permission; the 'one black puss' failed not to make its appearance, and was served first to its portion of rice, after which it departed; and the child had but just finished her meal, when the mistress of the hut entered, and told her that she might help herself to three eggs out of the fowl-house, but that she must not take any of the talking ones: perhaps, too, she might find the black puss there, also; but if she did, she was to take no notice of her. Unluckily all the eggs seemed to be as fond of talking

as if they had been so many old maids; and the moment that the child entered the fowl-house, there was a cry of 'Take me! Take me!' from all quarters. However, she was punctual in her obedience; and although the conversable eggs were remarkably fine and large, she searched about till at length she had collected three little dirty-looking eggs, that had not a word to say for themselves. The old woman now dismissed her guest, bidding her to return home without fear; but not to forget to break one of the eggs under each of the three trees near which she had seen an old woman that morning. The first egg produced a water-jug exactly similar to that which she had broken; out of the second came a whole large sugar estate; and out of the third a splendid equipage, in which she returned to her aunt, delivered up the jug, related that an old woman in a red docker, i.e. petticoat, had made her a great lady, and then departed in triumph to her sugar estate.

"Stung by envy, the aunt lost no time in sending her own daughter to search for the same good fortune which had befallen her cousin. She found the cotton-tree and the headless old woman, and had the same question addressed to her; but instead of returning the same answer—'What me see?' said she; 'me see one old woman without him head!'

Now this reply was doubly offensive; it was rude, because it reminded the old lady of what might certainly be considered as a personal defect; and it was dangerous, as, if such a circumstance were to come to the ears of the buckras, it might bring her into trouble, women being seldom known to walk and talk without their heads, indeed, if ever, except by the assistance of Obeah (Witchcraft). 'Bad child!' cried the old woman; 'bad child! and bad will come to you!' Matters were no better managed near the cocoa-tree; and even when she reached the mahogany, although she saw that the old woman had not only got her head on, but had a red docker besides, she could not prevail on herself to say more than a short 'How day?' without calling her 'grannie.' (Among negroes it is almost tantamount to an affront to address by the name, without affixing some term of relationship, such as 'grannie,' or 'uncle,' or 'cousin.' . . .) However, she received the permission to eat rice at the cottage, coupled with the injunction of giving a share to the black puss; an injunction, however, which she totally disregarded, although she scrupled not to assure her hostess that she had suffered puss to eat till she could eat no more. The old lady in the red petticoat seemed to swallow the lie very glibly, and despatched the girl to the fowl-house for three

eggs, as she had before done her cousin; but having been cautioned against taking the talking eggs, she conceived that these must needs be the most valuable; and, therefore made a point of selecting those three which seemed to be the greatest gossips of the whole poultry yard. Then, lest their chattering should betray her disobedience, she thought it best not to return into the hut, and, accordingly, set forward on her return home; but she had not yet reached the mahogany tree, when curiosity induced her to break one of the eggs. To her infinite disappointment it proved to be empty; and she soon found cause to wish that the second had been empty too; for, on her dashing it against the ground, out came an enormous yellow snake, which flew at her with dreadful hissings. Away ran the girl; a fallen bamboo lay in her path; she stumbled over it and fell. In her fall the third egg was broken; and the old woman without the head immediately popping out of it, told her that if she had treated her as civilly, and had adhered as closely to the truth as her cousin had done, she would have obtained the same good fortune; but that as she had shown her nothing but rudeness, and told her nothing but lies, she must be contented to carry nothing home but the empty egg-shells. The old woman then jumped upon the yellow snake, galloped away

with incredible speed, and never showed her red docker in that part of the island any more." [4]

After what has been premised, the real subject of this sketch is now approached with some trepidation. Even after years of residence in the "bush" itself, in closest contact with its people, it is not easy to follow the narrator, when one has chanced to overhear an Anancy Story in the telling. The native power of imagery, replete with proverb, and picturesque in trope and figure, together with the peculiar intonation where a shade of inflection changes "yes" to "no," and especially the fascinating patois with all its disregard for person, gender, tense or case, completely mystifies and makes one doubt whether one has grasped the true meaning in the end.

Even as experienced a narrator as Henry M. Stanley is forced to preface a volume of African Legends with the admission: "Faithfully as I have endeavoured to follow the unsophisticated narrators, it is impossible for me to reproduce the simplicity of style with which they were given, or to describe the action which accompanied them." [5] The same confession must be made as regards the Anancy Stories of the Jamaica "bush."

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[4] Matthew Gregory Lewis, Journal of a West India Proprietor. London: 1834, p. 253, *seq.*

[5] Henry M. Stanley, My Dark Companions and Their Strange Stories. London: 1893, p. 2.

Hence, the Tales about to be introduced in roughest outline, are offered with an apology and many a misgiving. No pretense is made at absolute accuracy. They are the fruit of patient search and not a little innocent eavesdropping, when the unsuspecting children of the "bush" were gathered of a moon-lit evening, all unconscious of who was lurking in the shadows, while they indulged in the time-honored pastime of story-telling. Much had to be filled in from conjecture, and the same story was seldom told twice without some modification or adjustment to environment.

Major Ellis, in speaking of the Folk-lore of the Twi-speaking Peoples, or as he calls them the Tshi-speaking Peoples, of the Gold Coast of West Africa, makes mention of the fact that, "according to some, this anansi was sometimes a man and sometimes a spider, and it seems probable that this tradition merely points to the existence of some early chief, who was known to his followers as 'The Spider'." [6]

This suggestion of Ellis, however, seems wide of the mark, as one Anancy Tale itself explains the origin of the term, and is strangely like what is perhaps the most popular of all the Brer Rabbit Stories. Anancy, it would seem, was a man of

[6] A. B. Ellis, The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa. London: 1887, p. 339.

shiftless and profligate habits, satisfied to enjoy the fruit of his son's labor, yet not man enough to assert any claim openly. He rather pilfers by night from the son's yam fields. Tacooma, his son, entirely unsuspicious of the identity of the thief, secretly sets a trap to catch him. He makes a figure of some sticky substance, and places it in the middle of the field where the provision grounds are located. During the darkness of the night, Anancy comes stealthily and encounters the figure. Receiving no answer to his challenge, he proceeds to belabor what he regards as an intruder, but at the first blow his right hand is securely held in the sticky substance. With dire threats of what he will do if he is not released, Anancy strikes with the other hand, which in turn is firmly held. He then threatens to "Buck like ram goat, sah!" This he proceeds to do, only to find his head, too, has become enmeshed. In the struggle that follows, poor Anancy rolls over and over with the figure, becoming more helpless at every turn, and finally is left utterly unable to move either hand or foot. In this condition he is found by Tacooma in the morning, and is so abashed and humiliated, that he at once converts himself into a spider, to hide in the dark crevices of the wall, where he cannot be seen. Hence, we are told, the proclivity of the spider to-day, to seek

the out-of-the-way nooks and corners where he may hide securely.

As a matter of fact, in Jamaica there is a certain species of house spider, large of body with yellowish stripes and hairy legs, that commonly secretes itself in the crevices of the interior of the buildings, that is always designated as Anancy. It is altogether a harmless insect, and it is considered very unlucky to kill one.

In all subsequent Tales, Anancy, or as he is usually called Nancy, is spoken of as a spider. But he always acts and conducts himself as a human being, though a very depraved one. Eating and drinking form his principal aim in life, and his power of consumption seems unlimited. With Crookie, his wife, and Tacooma, his son, there is constant bickering and quarrel. Many of the Tales might lead one to identify Tacooma with the Leopard, and certainly the Leopard often figures as Tacooma; but with the best information at hand, it would seem rash to assert this identity as a fact. Let it remain merely as a strong impression of the writer.

Tacooma is much stronger than his father, but when it comes to cunning and deception, he is no match for Anancy. For example, when Tacooma

finds a particularly good field of old yams, that is, yams that have been abandoned and allowed to remain an extra year in the ground, and as he will not disclose the secret, Anancy cuts a little hole in the sack that Tacooma usually takes with him, and then puts several handfuls of little pebbles into the sack. When Tacooma starts out the next day, he is easily tracked by Anancy, who follows the line of pebbles, and after Tacooma's departure, he despoils the field.

Another typical instance of Anancy's greed depicts our friend doing the heavy work of criticizing and bossing, while his wife, Crookie, and Tacooma cultivate a fine provision ground. When the crop is nearly ripe and almost ready for the harvest, Anancy feigns an urgent business engagement that will keep him away some weeks, and persuades Crookie and Tacooma to go off for a vacation, which he asserts they have earned by their strenuous labors. But Anancy, starting on his way, turns back as soon as he feels that the provision ground is deserted, and gathers all the yams and other good things for himself.

It is especially in his dealings with the other animals that Anancy's cunning shows at its best. To gain the mastery over the Leopard by stratagem, he sews up one of his own eyes, and then goes danc-

ing by Mr. Leopard in great glee and exultation, crying out again and again, as if in exuberance of joy. When Leopard's curiosity is sufficiently aroused, he asks the reason of this unwonted glee, and is told that with his eye sewed up in this manner, he can see the most wonderful things. Leopard wants to share in the vision. So, just to accommodate him, as it were, Anancy sews up both his eyes, and then has him at his mercy and can lead him wherever he likes.

Leopard seems to be Anancy's pet enemy. For, on another occasion, the Spider prevails on Lizard to have his teeth filed, and then display himself before Leopard, who at once wants to know how he can have his teeth filed in the same way, that thereby he can tear his prey more easily. Anancy tells him that he must first allow himself to be tied in a large tree. To this Leopard submits, and when he is once securely fastened, he becomes the object of Anancy's taunts and gibes.

Wearying of his sport, Anancy finally leaves poor Leopard helpless in the tree. Duck Ant passes by, and at Leopard's urgent pleading, gnaws down the tree and frees Leopard. To show his gratitude and appreciation, Leopard now invites Duck Ant to a feast. Anancy hears of this,

sends Duck Ant on a fool's errand, disguises himself as Duck Ant, and enjoys the feast himself. The meal finished, Anancy takes his departure. Shortly after, Duck Ant actually arrives, all apologies for being late. Leopard now thinks that this must be Anancy masquerading as Duck Ant, and he immediately belabors him lustily with a subijack (supple-jack). Embittered by his experience, Duck Ant becomes a misanthrope, and from that day to this, he has done all the damage possible to the works of man.

Anancy is never at a loss for a subterfuge. He secures a swarm of bees, by making a wager with them that they cannot all get into a large bag. When they have actually crowded in to win the wager, he closes the bag on the entire swarm. This last subterfuge with slight variations is used again and again by Anancy in his various escapades.

Occasionally Anancy is bested by some animal or other, but almost invariably he has sweet revenge. Thus Lizard once overreached him, and before long paid the penalty. The king of the country had a prize cock that he valued very highly. Anancy forthwith killed the cock and in the quiet of night carried it to Lizard's house, where he cooked it and made a meal of it. The feathers he scattered under Lizard's bed, and left the plate of

bones beside the sleeping Lizard. He then proceeded to pour boiling water down poor Lizard's mouth to deprive him of the power of speech. When the cock was missed in the morning, Anancy joined the hue and cry, and finally directed the searchers to Lizard's house, where Lizard himself is so used up by the scalding water, that he has not even left his bed. The feathers and the chicken bones are accepted as evidence of guilt, and Lizard is dragged off for trial. Having lost the power of speech, to all the questions asked him, he can only move his head up and down in a most helpless way. From that day to this, poor Lizard has continued the practise of shaking his head in this peculiar manner.

P. M. Sherlock, writing in the *Empire Review* for November, 1924, relates a couple of typical Anancy Stories at some length. Briefly summarized, they run as follows: Desirous of accompanying some birds that were going to an island for a feast, Anancy borrows a feather from each of them and joins them in their flight. Greedy as usual, he wears out the patience of the birds, who snatch back, each one its own feather, leaving Anancy apparently marooned upon the island. Nothing daunted, our ingenious friend casts a couple of twigs upon the water and, using them as pontoons,

he proceeds to skim across to the mainland, carrying with him a sack filled with the remnants of the feast. Brother Crocodile encounters him on the way, and the wide-open jaws of the reptile promise an early ending of Anancy's career. Presence of mind, however, as usual saves the situation. Greeting Brother Crocodile as a dear friend, he pretends that he has come all this distance just to give him the sack of food as a present. Friendship once established, he accompanies Crocodile home, and after supper is placed for the night in the room where the eggs of the Crocodile family are hatching. There are ten eggs in all. By morning only the shells are left. Anancy has enjoyed a hearty meal. After breakfast, before the night's work is discovered, he makes a start for home, being rowed in a little boat by two fishes. But scarcely have they gotten under way, when the Crocodile Family discover what has happened to the eggs, and loudly demand his return, but Anancy persuades the rowers that the shouts are merely warnings to make haste as a storm is coming.

Reaching the shore, his sack now empty on his shoulder, Anancy continues true to form, and again makes use of the trick already referred to as one of his favorites. He would teach his rowers how

to do the bag-dance. First he has them hold the bag, and jumping in, he cavorts around in it most hilariously. It is then his turn to hold the bag, and as both fish jump in together at his direction, he quickly closes the bag and starts for home, carrying along his booty. His supper has been duly provided for.[7]

Some years ago, Mary Pamela Milne-Home published a little volume entitled *Mamma's Black Nurse Stories*, and while her knowledge would seem to be derived, not from personal observations, but from the hearsay of others, she has some really good examples of genuine Anancy Stories. However, she conceives the central figure of the Tales as "a hairy old man with long nails, very ugly, called Brother or Father Anansi," who "sometimes takes the form of a spider." She may have borrowed this idea from Ellis. In any case, she thus loses the whole viewpoint of the Jamaica peasant, with whom the grotesque and impossible is an essential prerequisite in the escapades of Brudder Anancy, as much as it is in the kindred tales of Brer Rabbit.

Perhaps her most characteristic story runs as follows. It is entitled: "The Story of Anansi and Tiger."

"There was a certain house in a town dat Anansi

[7] P. M. Sherlock, Jamaica Superstitions. Empire Review, Nov. 1924.

and Tiger wan' to visit. When Anansi go, him tell de fambly ob de house, say dat Tiger was his fader fus' riding-horse. So when Tiger go back, de people den tell Tiger what Anansi say. Well, Tiger say dat 'im must har from Anansi, so Tiger go home an' ask Anansi. Anansi say dat 'im neber say so. Tiger say, 'Come, let us go to justice.' Anansi opint 'im a day. When de opinted day come, Anansi fallen sick. Tiger say, 'You mus' go, Anansi.' He said, 'Brar Tiger, I no able walk.' Tiger say, 'I will car' you on my back.' Anansi said, 'Brar Tiger, you mus' put dat lill' someting dem call saddle, dat when me gwine to fall down me can ketch up.' Well Tiger put on saddle, 'im say again, 'You mus' put on dat lill' someting dem call bridle, dat when you gwine to fall down me can ketch you up.' Tiger put on bridle. He said again, 'You mus' mek me put on dat lill' someting dem call 'pur, and mek me hole dat someting dem call horsewhip for dribe fly when dem come fe pitch 'pon you.' Tiger say, 'All you requier you shall hab, but go you mus' to-day.' So Anansi put on eberyting he wanted on Tiger, an' then mounted on. Just as Tiger want ter walk a lill' fast Anansi say, 'Oh lahd! Brar Tiger, me ober weak, me da go fall down,' untell when he nare de town where 'is frends are. He put in whip an 'pur to Tiger an'

sing out, 'What me tell you? me no tell you, say Tiger is me fader fus' riding-horse?' an' 'im des ride up to de door an' tell a boy to tek 'is horse, an' as 'im gane inside Tiger tek 'is walk 'trate way ter de wood. End ob 'tory." [8]

One who spent ten years in closest touch with the children of the Jamaica "bush," assures us: "The Jamaica Anancy Stories told with the inimitable patois, peculiar intonations and gestures of the peasantry, how delectable and interesting! These simple crude stories with their proverbs are the expression of their philosophy of life, and contain in their rude husk a moral." [9]

In the modern circus to-day, that artist of fun and merriment commonly styled the clown, plays the buffoon and with horse-play and clap-traps entertains the young, and recalls to elders the more or less innocent amusement of childish pranks. In some such spirit, Anancy plays a part, oftentimes a discreditable one, yet in keeping with the simple, unaffected spirit of the untutored mind of the "bush."

With the Uncle Remus Stories, these Anancy Tales have a common origin in the old African Folk-Lore. The tiger, leopard, lion, wolf and

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[8] Mary Pamela Milne-Home, Mamma's Black Nurse Stories. Edinburgh: 1890, p. 51, *seq.*

[9] Rev. A. J. Emerick, S. J., in Woodstock Letters, Vol. XLIV, p. 188.

other animals absolutely unknown in Jamaica, feature commonly in them. Like the escapades of Brer Rabbit, too, these Tales have been passed along in living tradition, suffering minor changes here and there, and always with a local coloring, but substantially they have remained intact. The old Creole nurses, or Nanas, who like the Southern Mammies, are a thing of the past, were the living medium of transmission. In their present setting, they have lost much of their quaintness, and the telling of them is fast becoming a lost art.

F. Hopkinson Smith relates a little incident in one of his pleasing Southern Sketches. The darky servant has purloined a leg from a roasted duck before it is placed on the table. Charged with the delinquency, to defend himself, he asserts that the duck had only a single leg. His Master wishing to convince the servitor of the error of his ways, takes him out to the duck yard to show him that every duck has two legs. It was a cold day in late autumn, and there all the ducks were standing, one foot neatly drawn up for warmth. In triumph the darky renewed his claim that these ducks had only a single foot. With a loud "Shoo," the Master affrighted them, and, of course, each duck produced the normal quota of legs, as they waddled off to a safe distance. As the Master was about to turn

and press his point, the old darky cut him short: "That ain't fair, Massah. You didn't say 'Shoo' to the other duck."

With the appearance of his book, the author was at once accused of plagiarism by carping critics, who called attention to the fact that a similar incident had already been related by Dean Swift, only geese were substituted for ducks. The author's assertion that he had actually heard the incident himself as a small boy in his old Virginia home, by many was not considered as convincing.

In the Jamaica Mountains, the same story is told to-day, as it has been told for many generations, only now it is neither ducks nor geese, but turkeys that figure in the narrative. All which goes to show, that ultimately, no doubt, the story was told around some friendly fire in distant Africa, before the slave bands broke up the family circle, and scattered the dusky denizens of the "bush" to the very extremities of the earth, to carry with them their simple Folk-Lore, a sacred memory of the haunts of their ancestors.

But not the least interesting feature of the Jamaica Anancy Stories is the fact that they tend to prove that the dominant influence exercised on the Jamaican peasantry even to our day was ultimately derived from the Ashanti of West Africa.

Through the folk-lore of a people we may trace its origin as well as its contacts with other peoples. The very word "Anancy" is derived from the Ashanti for spider, which is "ananse," and the Ashanti hero of the Tales is called "Ananse Kwaku," simply meaning that Ananse was born on a Wednesday. While, then, the term is also used in the folk-lore of the Gold Coast to-day under a slightly different form, Anansi, we find that there the Spider's son is called Kweku Tsin.[10] Among the Ashantis themselves, however, the name is Ntikuma [11] which is substantially the same as the Tacooma of the Jamaica "bush."

Incidentally, too, the Ashantis have a proverb; "No one tells stories to Ntikuma." Captain Rattray explains the meaning, that "as the spider is the fount and origin of all stories, the son, Ntikuma, would be supposed to know every story in the world, having heard them from his father. The saying is used in the sense of 'I know all about that, tell me something I do not know.' " [12] Is not this practically the equivalent of our Jamaica dictum, "I'm not asking you; I'm telling you"?

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[10] Barker and Sinclair, West African Folk-Tales. London: 1917, p. 24.
[11] R. Sutherland Rattray, Ashanti Proverbs. Oxford: 1916, p. 73.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

CHAPTER VIII

BUSH FUNERALS

ON THE hills at Refuge! Far to the north, the broken country in receding undulations, studded with clumps of palms and areas of sugar cane, stretches away to the restless Caribbean. On the gentle rising to the right, is the little church with its red roof and simple bell cupola; while the mission cross, fully thirty feet in height, towers above it. The spotless whitewashed walls of the building itself bring out a pleasing contrast to the dark green of the shrubbery. Like a sentinel it stands upon the hill, watching over the village of the dead, that nestles close about it, as if to share in the blessings of Holy Mass.

Slowly the bell in the cupola begins to toll. With mournful, resonant note, it breaks the peaceful silence of the hour, to speak its message of the passing of a soul. Up from the valley, a funeral procession is finding its tortuous way. Old John

Ferreira is dead. "Marse Marny" he was called by the children of the "bush." Only a few short months ago, a visiting Missionary had written of him: "Old John Ferreira, who lives near the church, is a Portuguese, seventy-two years old, who came to Jamaica in 1857, and has been in this one spot ever since. In spite of his years, he is still a good strong specimen of a man, and his solid piety is refreshing when one meets it in such uncongenial surroundings. Somehow or other I could not help thinking of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez as I looked at him; whether it was his simplicity and earnestness combined with real Old-World holiness, or the fact that he is a widower unaffectedly devoted to God, or perhaps the union of the two things in him, I can't tell; but such was the impression he left on me. Looking up at the heavens this evening, after the usual night prayers and catechism instruction by the priest in the church, his eyes fell on the constellation of Orion. Whereupon, turning to me and pointing to the line in it of three upper stars which was almost parallel to the horizon, he said: 'In my country we call those three "Marys," and the other three near them, we call "the three Kings." And those two stars close by, which shine together so as to seem almost to be one star, we call St. Lucy.' As he spoke, I could

imagine the peace sanctified by religion which is afforded in a truly Catholic country, a peace which in this case, this Madeira peasant had not lost with departure from the scenes of his far-away childhood." [1]

For these fifty years, then, has Marse Marny been endearing himself to the trustful children of the "bush," and many a lowly hovel hereabouts has often been gladdened by his kindly charity. He has won the love and deep affection of all, and the poor, sorrowing peasantry fully realize that they have lost a gentle and truly sympathetic friend.

Like a cry of lamentation, their wail sweeps up the hill. Even the crippled and the aged have gathered in groups along the path that the funeral must take, and little children, frightened at they know not what, lie prone upon the earth, and bury their kinky little heads in Nana's skirts, weeping through sympathy for the tears that course unchecked down the furrowed visage of the disconsolate old woman, who sits upon the ground with chin between her hands and with unseeing eyes gazes off toward the purple Caribbean.

The groups of Blacks spread out, and form two lines along the way. In every hand is held a tree-branch freshly plucked from the nearby shrubbery.

[1] Rev. P. F. X. Mulry, S. J., in Woodstock Letters, Vol. XXXV, p. 224.

As the funeral draws near, in solemn unison the branches wave, while the touching anthem of the multitude, with many sobs and lamentations, passes down the breeze: "Good-bye, Marse Marny! Good-bye, Marse Marny! Good-bye, Marse Marny!" Then as the children of the "bush" wander disconsolate back through the fields to the sheltered nooks and hollows where lie their humble homes, good Marse Marny must be looking down with tender pity on the multitude, and asking the Mother of all grace, to touch with light these poor but loving souls, still chained in darkness, and who fail as yet to see the spirit that guided him in winning their affection and their love.

A few evenings later, the Missionary's slumbers were rudely shattered by a noisy demonstration in the "bush." Another soul had passed away, and with rite and ritual differing but little from that followed long centuries ago in the forest fastnesses of distant Africa, these descendants of the victims of the slave-gangs' lust for gold, now mourn their dead throughout the night. However, in all truth it must be admitted that there really seemed little of sorrow in their plaint, and nothing mournful in the hymns they chanted.

On these occasions, a leader with a "selfish"

Falmouth of a Hundred Years Ago
When Sugar Was King

Headquarters at Cassava River

Old Friends at Seaford Town

School at Refuge

Quarters at Friendship

A Corner of the Sacristy

voice; that is, one who can carry the refrain above the contending claims of rival harmonizers, and consequently one who may be said to monopolize the leadership by force of voice if not of character, serious of mien and pompous in his manner, proceeds to "raise the hymn," or as the natives say "to rise de hymn." In solemn recitative, he repeats each couplet, then sets the note by starting off in strident tones. The entire assembly at once join in. The couplet finished, the leader recites another line or two; and so they continue until the dawn of day. No matter how well the words are known, this recitative must never be omitted. And, as much effort is expended on each hymn, it is a necessary consequence that rum and refreshments are freely served to all throughout the night.

Sir Hans Sloane, writing in 1707, notices that "The negroes from some countries think that they return to their own country when they die in Jamaica, and therefore regard death but little, imagining they shall change their condition by that means from servile to free, and so for this reason often cut their own throats. Whether they die thus or naturally, their country people make great lamentations, mournings, and howlings about them expiring, and at their funeral throw in rum and

victuals into their graves, to serve them in the other world. Sometimes they bury it in gourds, at other times spill it on the graves."[2] As many old African practises are still observed in the Jamaica "bush" funerals to-day, it may prove interesting to go into the matter in some detail.

In December, 1855, the United States Sloop-of-War "Jamestown," then flagship of the African Squadron, visited the Gold Coast of Western Africa, which at one time had been the mart for the most desirable type of slaves brought to Jamaica, and the Chaplain of the ship, the Reverend Charles W. Thomas, relates an experience at Elmina. "In our walk through the town," he says, "we entered a house in which there was a corpse, a wife of the tenant. The chief mourners, who were slaves, were painted all over in white mud, literally white-washed, and the remaining wives of the landlord were seated on the dirt floor of the room entertaining the company. Near the deceased, and on the mat on which she lay, was a plate of boiled rice and fowl, and a bottle containing a little rum. These, they said, afforded her nourishment on her journey, and were very acceptable. Two old hags sat at the feet of the corpse, beating time on pieces

[2] Hans Sloane, M. D., Natural History of Jamaica. London: 1707, Vol. I, Introduction, p. xlviii.

of iron hoop, and to this music two women were dancing in a space near the bed." [3]

This is no more grotesque than the description given by Gardner in his *History of Jamaica*, of the obsequies among the slaves before the close of the 18th century. He says of the period in question: "A feast was provided, at which there was singing, drumming, and dancing. When at length it was time to carry the coffin to the grave, it was borne more frequently on the heads than on the shoulders of the bearers. After a little progress had been made, a sudden stop was almost sure to take place: the corpse, it was said, was obstinate, and would not go on; something was surely the matter. Presently the cause would be explained. Perhaps, just by, a man lived who had been at variance with the dead: he must be visited and soundly scolded, and then the departed spirit would rest. Quietude seemed to come much quicker if the accused person was liberal in his offers of rum.

"Occasionally the corpse was displeased with the mode of conveyance, and this had to be changed. When at length the grave was reached and the coffin was lowered, cooked food, in which no salt had been put, was placed upon it; and in covering

[3] Charles W. Thomas, Adventures and Observations of the West Coast of Africa and Its Islands. New York: 1860, p. 199.

up the grave the attendants often turned their backs to it and threw the earth in from between their legs. This was an infallible way of preventing the spirit of the departed from returning with them to their homes. Sometimes the spirit was caught with many ceremonies in a box provided for the purpose, and then the box was carefully buried. The surviving widow of the departed was expected to go more careless in dress than usual for some few weeks; but when tired of the single state she cooked a fowl, and carried it, with the broth, to the grave, accompanied by friends who either sympathised with her or perhaps merely wished to spend a pleasant evening. A song was sung expressive of confidence in the happiness of the departed, fresh earth was piled upon the grave, some of the viands were cast upon it, and the rest eaten. More singing and also more dancing followed, and the party returning home, left the bereaved one to select another companion. No propitiatory offering could, however, keep the departed from occasionally breaking bounds. Hence every negro trembled at the mention of duppies; these are the ghosts of the northern climes. Even now, among the ignorant, when a corpse is prepared for the grave, dressed, as is not unusual, in a full suit of clothes, the pockets are often cut away, lest the duppy should fill them with

stones and annoy the living on his return. For nine days the room in which death took place was undisturbed, and a light left burning at night; nor were little conveniences to which the departed was accustomed, as water to bathe the feet, etc., omitted. Food was often prepared, and if a bold-hearted but hungry member of the household consumed it in secret, the appetite of the duppy became the occasion of remark." [4]

It might be noted here, that even to-day, as a funeral is passing, many a Black Jamaican will turn his back to the corpse, so that the duppy will not recognize him and perhaps return to annoy him, and the chasing of the shadow at the country wake is even now far from being a thing of the past; but more of this shortly.

Matthew Gregory Lewis, more familiarly known as "Monk" Lewis, visited his estates in Jamaica in 1815; that is, some twenty years before the abolition of slavery. In the Diary of his visit, we read: "The negroes are always buried in their gardens, and many strange and fantastical ceremonies are observed on the occasion. If the corpse be that of a grown person, they consult it as to which way it pleases to be carried; and they make attempts on various roads without success, before they can hit

[4] Gardner, History of Jamaica, p. 186.

upon the right one. Till that is accomplished, they stagger under the weight of the coffin, struggle against its force, which draws them in different direction from that in which they had settled to go; and sometimes in the contest the corpse and the coffin jump off the shoulders of the bearers. But if, as is frequently the case, any person is suspected of having hastened the catastrophe, the corpse will then refuse to go any road but the one which passes by the habitation of the suspected person, and as soon as it reaches his house, no human power is equal to persuading it to pass. As the negroes are extremely superstitious, and very much afraid of ghosts, whom they call the duppy, I rather wonder at their choosing to have their dead buried in their gardens; but I understand their argument to be, that they need only fear the duppies of their enemies, but have nothing to apprehend from those after death, who loved them in their lifetime; but the duppies of their adversaries are very alarming beings, equally powerful by day as by night, and who not only are spiritually terrific, but who can give very substantial knocks on the pate, whenever they see fit occasion, and can find a good opportunity." [5]

[5] Matthew Gregory Lewis, Journal of a West India Proprietor, p. 97.

Referring to this same period, the beginning of the 19th century, Gardner tells us that some changes, it is true, had taken place in the mode of conducting funerals, but that in the main the time-honored customs were still preserved. "When a person of any kind of importance died," he says, "preparation was made for a wake. If the family were not able to bear the expense, plates enveloped in black crape were sent round from house to house, and the gifts of those kindly disposed collected. It was thought something extremely mean not to contribute for such a purpose. All who chose to come to the wake were freely welcomed: it was a grand time for gossip, feasting, and too often for drunkenness."

Evidently in the Jamaica "bush" to-day, everyone must be of importance, and it is no unusual thing to pass around a subscription list to defray the expenses of the wake, and incidentally assure an ample supply of refreshments.

Gardner continues his description: "The ceremony of catching the shadow of the dead person was usually gone through with many strange antics; and when this wonderful feat was declared to have been accomplished, the shadow was put into a small coffin and carefully buried. After this there was no fear of the duppy, or ghost, giving any trouble.

"Still the dead man could not, as a rule, go quietly to his last resting-place unless all outstanding matters were adjusted. The friends or relations who bore the coffin often received some hint, the nature of which was best known to themselves, and then placing their ears to the coffin, they professed to interpret the utterances of the departed, who it seems had not yet lost the gift of speech. Slanders spoken against him, or injuries not yet redressed, were now publicly proclaimed. More frequently the corpse was declared to proclaim the names of its debtors: the creditors were invariably forgotten. Woe to the man who owed anything to the estate of the departed. No matter what superhuman efforts the bearers seemed to make, the corpse was obstinate, and would not go past the residence of the delinquent. A living dun is usually a very inconvenient visitor, but what can a man do with a dead one? A coffin before one's door, which no power on earth can lift until the debt is paid, is perhaps one of the most unpleasant modes of enforcing payment that can well be imagined, and, as a rule, it was most successful. Yet it sometimes turned out that the corpse was not honest, that the alleged debt had been paid; and then it was wonderful how light the coffin of the claimant be-

came, and how rapidly the bearers proceeded on their way." [6]

J. Stewart, writing in 1823, describes a rather amusing incident. "A negro who was to be interred in one of the towns, had, it was pretended by some friend, a claim on another negro for a sum of money. The latter denied any such claim, and, accordingly, at the funeral of the deceased, the accustomed ceremonies took place opposite to the door of his supposed debtor; and this mummery was continued for hours, till the magistrates thought proper to interfere, and compelled the defunct to forego his claim, and proceed quietly on to his place of rest." [7]

"In 1831," we are told by Gardner, "night funerals were prohibited by law, owners permitting them were liable to a penalty of fifty pounds, and slaves attending them, to a whipping of thirty-nine lashes. In the early part of the century they were very frequent. The scenes presented on these occasions were wild in the extreme, though rarely witnessed by white people, and only then by stealth. One or more negroes played upon the goomba, and another, at intervals, blew a horn made of a conch shell; another took the solo part of a recita-

[6] Gardner, *l.c.*, p. 385.
[7] J. Stewart, A View of the Past and Present State of the Island of Jamaica. Edinburgh: 1823, p. 276.

tive of a wild funeral wail, usually having reference to the return of the departed to Africa; while a party sitting in a circle, gave the chorus. These melancholy dirges were often protracted through the night, the coffin not being laid in the grave till the morning star arose. Food consisting of pork, yam, rum, etc., was placed in the coffin, for the use of the departed in his long journey across the blue waters to the fatherland. In later years it became common to use more expedition at the grave, and when the funeral was over, and a few dirges sung, to return to the house and spend the night in feasting, often accompanied with dancing." [8]

To fully understand the food offering to the dead, we must again have recourse to the origin of the practise in the Africa "bush," which Dr. Weatherford thus explains: "When a man dies his spirit adds itself to that innumerable company of spirits which fill the world about us. The spirit needs food and care just as it did in its human incarnation, save that it now only consumes the essence of the food, leaving the visible or material food, which is eaten by the natives. A hut is built for the spirit of the departed man and food is regularly taken and left by the relatives." [9]

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[8] Gardner, *l.c.*, p. 386.
[9] W. D. Weatherford, The Negro from Africa to America. New York: 1924, p. 45.

The present day "bush" funeral in Jamaica is often characterized by many of the old-time superstitions and practises. The Jamaican peasant is a born actor, and the earnestness with which the shadow is duly chased and finally caught, makes the onlooker fancy that his dusky friend is really seeing things; and surely what he eventually grasps firmly in his hands must be more substantial than a figment of the imagination! On the way to the grave, too, at times the wrestling with the coffin, to drag it past some hovel or other, actually passes beyond description. The carriers, dripping with perspiration from the effort that they are apparently making, struggle heroically to urge their burden forward. They even plead with it, and "argify." Finding the task, however, beyond their combined effort, they lay the coffin down and pull and strain but to no avail, while a perfect pandemonium breaks out in the assembled throng that clusters around, ready with advice and suggestions of every kind. Finally, the chief spirit in the farce kneels down and puts his ear against the coffin. His faculty of hearing must be extraordinary, for despite the din and noise, he receives minute instructions from the late lamented. The owner of the hovel off the path, who perhaps is standing in his doorway taking in the scene, has done the dead

man some wrong. The entire multitude, abandoning the coffin in the road, troops up to give the unfortunate aggrievor of the dead an unpleasant outpouring of vituperation and abuse, until the price of rum is forth-coming, whereupon all throng back again to the road, pick up the coffin, and continue on their way without more ado.

The origin of all this would seem to be the custom prevalent from prehistoric time among the Natives of West Africa, to detect the cause of death, when witchcraft was suspected. More than a century ago, M. Malte-Brun observed in the case of the West African Negroes: "In their funerals, which are attended with much howling and singing, a very singular piece of superstition prevails. The bearers of the body ask the deceased if he has been poisoned or enchanted, and pretend to receive a reply by a motion of the coffin, which is no doubt produced by one of their boldest jugglers. The person whom the deceased accuses of having killed him by enchantment is at once condemned to be sold for a slave." [10]

Captain Rattray has given us a graphic account of this "ordeal," of which he was himself the witness, among the Ashanti in West Africa. He says

[10] M. Malte-Brun, Universal Geography. Philadelphia; 1827, Vol. III, p. 23.

in part: "The custom of 'carrying the corpse' when the cause of death is supposed to be witchcraft is briefly as follows. An open stretcher is made of palm branches, and on this the corpse is laid. . . . The stretcher is then placed on the heads of two men, who carry it out into the street. The whole people assemble. The chief or head man of the village advances, cutlass in hand, and addresses the corpse saying, 'If I were the one who killed you by magic, advance on me and knock me.' And so on, each in turn comes up, till the guilty one's turn comes, when the corpse will urge the carriers forward to butt against him with the litter. A person so accused can appeal for a change in carriers." [11]

In the case of church-members in the Jamaica "bush," much of the farcical carrying on is perforce omitted. But even in their case, at times, when they wake the dead, and incidentally the entire neighborhood, not a few of the time-honored superstitions will creep out, in spite of all the clergymen say or do. In general, however, the church member will feign to be above these remnants of the days of slavery. No matter what his belief or lack of belief may be, to have a minister of religion officiate at the funeral is all-important,

[11] R. S. Rattray, Ashanti Proverbs. Oxford: 1916, p. 53.

and even before the occasion of the display is "well dead, sah," some relative or friend, who is perhaps to play the part of master of ceremonies, will seek out the minister of his choice, to make his request in due form, pretty much after the following formula:

"Parson, please, me beg y'u one hole, sah!" This means, in every-day parlance, that the petitioner wants a free grave, or hole, as they call it, which usually costs a few shillings. The request granted, the wily suppliant takes courage and begins afresh. "Parson, please, me beg y'u one heading, sah!" In other words, he asks that the minister of the Gospel should come free of charge to the hovel where the funeral is to start, and lead the procession to the cemetery. For this added splendor and pomp, the ordinary charge is about double the price of the grave, or hole. This granted, too, the self-appointed Committee of Claims now comes to the real purpose of his quest. "Parson, please, me beg y'u one churching, sah!" He asks nothing less, than that the Reverend Gentleman should not only conduct a service at the house, but that he should then lead the procession to the church, where a more prolonged and elaborate ceremony may be conducted, with all the singing of hymns that patience will permit, and possibly too a little

panegyric on the departed-one's real or fancied virtues, and then again lead the procession to the cemetery. For such a ceremony, it is customary to charge a really substantial fee.

But even in the case of professed church members, there is occasionally a reversion to type, at least on the part of some of those who attend the obsequies, and follow the cortege to the burying ground.

In the early part of the World War, the Bugler in the Salvation Army Corps at Montego Bay had died. He had been a really likable lad and universally respected. As a consequence, his funeral was attended by the community at large, and the Town Band led the procession to the grave. As this was essentially a church function, the Band discoursed a solemn dirge, such as would have been suitable for the funeral of a churchman or a high government official, and really the musicians played more than ordinarily well. But no sooner was the service at the grave concluded, when the black population proceeded to escort the Band back to town, and it took no serious urging of the populace to evoke a lively tune, which turned out to be the famous Tipperary. Whereupon, men, women and children, in long lines joined arms, and proceeded to cavort and prance along in dance formation,

marching not to Tipperary, which they vociferously proclaimed their goal, but to Montego Bay, and the way could not be long enough. And yet, there was no disrespect for the dead intended, nor was any given. It was merely a light-hearted people turning back from sorrow to the ordinary cares of life, which they habitually meet with laughter and song.

Another old African custom almost invariably marks the Jamaica "bush" funeral even to-day. Before starting for the burial ground, the coffin is raised and lowered three times. No one can give any real explanation for the fact. It is always done that way, because it has always been done that way, and that is all there is about it as far as the peasant is concerned. However, the very same practise has been in vogue among the Ashanti of West Africa from time immemorial.[12] And so sacred had the custom become, that after the Ashanti had developed into a conquering nation with the advent of the famous Golden Stool, the symbol of power and national vitality, with the enthroning, or rather enstooling of each new King, the ceremony required that he should feign three times to sit upon the Golden Stool. Actually he never did sit upon it, but he was required to raise and lower himself three

[12] R. S. Rattray, Ashanti. Oxford: 1923, p. 82.

times, as he would be raised and lowered after death.[13] It was almost as if he were reminded, "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return."

A necessary aftermath of every real "bush" funeral is known as ninth-night. This means, that the ninth night after a person's decease, the attendant duppy or ghost must be laid to rest by song and feasting, that commences after the manner of the wake, and closes at the hour of dawn, more like a mad carousal than a religious exercise.

Over a century ago, Bryan Edwards came to the conclusion, in respect to the forbears of the present Jamaican peasantry, "that their funeral songs and ceremonies are commonly nothing more than the dissonance of savage barbarity and riot; as remote from the fond superstitions to which they are ascribed, as from the sober dictates of rational sorrow." [14]

This is in keeping with what Bowditch tells us of the Ashanti: "The singing is almost all recitative, and this is the only part of the music in which the women partake; they join in the choruses, and at the funeral of a female sing the dirge itself; but the frenzy of the moment renders it such a mixture

[13] Rattray, *l.c.*, p. 82.
[14] Bryan Edwards, History of the West Indies, Vol. II, p. 85.

of yells and screeches, that it bids defiance to all notation." [15]

We must not wonder, then, that the descendants of these misguided children of the African Forests should retain so much of primeval custom and ceremonial in the heart of the Jamaican "bush," until religious thought and Christian practise can gradually win them from their superstitious excesses.

It will take time, however, to eradicate the last of the grotesque funeral customs which long centuries of practise has deep ingrained in the race.

William Bosman, writing from the Gold Coast, West Africa, about 1702, describes the funeral ceremonies of the natives, and adds: "As soon as the corpse is in the ground every one goes where he pleases, but most of them to the House of Mourning, to drink and be merry, which continues for several days following; so that this part of the mourning has the appearance rather of a wedding than a funeral." [16] This custom, too, has its counterpart, as we shall see presently, in the Jamaica "bush" of our own days.

Mr. H. G. De Lisser, whose characterization of the Jamaican peasant is so true to life, published a

[15] T. Edward Bowditch, Mission from Cape Coast Colony to Ashantee. London: 1819, p. 364.

[16] Guillaume Bosman, Voyage de Guinee. Utrecht: 1705, p. 239.

little volume in 1912, entitled *Twentieth Century Jamaica.* His realistic description of a ninth-night is well deserving of more than a passing notice, showing as it does, that this grotesque practise is not confined to the "bush" alone, but finds its way into the outskirts of the towns, as well as into the slums of Kingston itself. He writes: "I was living in Kingston, when, one night, about five years ago, I was startled by hearing a long-drawn-out shriek. It fell away to silence, then rose again and again, a series of piercing sounds that stabbed through the darkness and waxed and waned with monotonous regularity. In a minute or two I was out in the street and endeavouring to locate the direction from which the sounds were coming; the only living beings to be seen were two boys, whose peculiar attitude attracted attention. They were kneeling with their heads held close to the ground, and listening intently. 'What is the matter?' I asked them. 'Nine-night, sah!' they replied laconically. 'Where?' They bent their heads still nearer to the ground, were silent for a moment, then pointed positively in a north-eastern direction. . . . I handed the elder of the two youths a shilling: could I go to this 'ninth-night?' He looked at me doubtfully, but agreed. 'I will teck y'u, sah,' he said; 'but a nine-night is a funny t'ing. Y'u must be

sarrawful until it come to about two o'clock; for if y'u laugh before dat time, dere is some man dat will teck stick an' lick y'u. Y'u can't meck fun as y'u like.' " . . .

"We walked for about a quarter of a mile, the sound of the incessant singing guiding us, and then I found myself in one of the poorest and most wretched of the slum-suburbs of Kingston. Inhabited by a heterogeneous population whose means of existence has been a problem to those who interest themselves in the condition of the Jamaica poor, it combines the characteristics of a village and a slum." . . .

"As we entered the village, the singing, which had ceased for a moment or two, burst forth again with increased violence, and the air was filled with sound. I heard the words,—

> Know that the Lord is God alone,
> He hath created and can destroy,

thundered out by the sonorous voices of the men, and sent to pierce the darkness and the sky above by the shrill ear-splitting crescendo of the women. My guides paused before an open gate; this was the place we were seeking." . . .

"Everything stood out distinctly: the sable faces shining with perspiration, the glistening white teeth,

the swaying bodies of the hymn-intoxicated people. There was something weird and wild and garish about that midnight gathering of men and women shouting under the calm star-lighted sky, vociferating that the Lord is God alone, while the rest of the city was hushed in the silence of sleep.

"I entered the place with some hesitation, and as I did so all eyes were turned on me, though the singing did not cease. One man rose and courteously offered me a chair a little apart from the singers; some of the younger women stared and giggled; a few withered dames glared at me suspiciously. Remembering my young guide had said that the religious men present would probably resent anything on my part which smacked of levity or contempt, I looked at the old women with so serious a countenance that they probably decided that I appreciated the importance of the function. While the singing continued, I had time to glance curiously round.

"One of the little rooms which I faced, stood with its door and windows wide open, and from where I sat I could easily see into it. A large iron bed, covered with a clean white spread, was conspicuous: the rest of the furniture consisted of two small tables; evidently the chairs belonging to the room were being utilized in the yard. The room I ob-

served, and it looked as though it had been garnished for some particular purpose. Seeing me gaze into it, one of my guides came over to me with the explanation. 'In there, sah, the woman dead.' Afterward I discovered what he meant, and what the meaning of this peculiar 'ninth-night' function was.

"Nine nights before, some one had died in that room, a woman whose children and relatives and friends were now, on the ninth night since her decease, holding a ceremony for the purpose of taking a last leave of her spirit. It is believed by the peasant people of the West Indies that if this leave-taking should be neglected, the wraith of the dead person would constantly hover near her last earthly residence, and be a source of discomfort and even serious danger to its living occupants. . . . Very rarely a night passes in any large West Indian town but you will hear the sound of vociferous singing, which indicates either a wake or a 'ninth-night.' And at some time or other during the proceedings the singers will loudly proclaim that the Lord is God alone, that being the one item which seems never to be omitted.

"On this night of which I write, the hymns were given out verse by verse, so that all should have a chance to sing. The man at the head of the small

table reads with a stentorian voice, and with a sublime disregard of all the rules of pronunciation. He pauses as he ends a verse, then leads the singing, the assembled guests valiantly following in his wake. Jealous of his authority, one or two old women suggest that he is 'taking a note too high,' and endeavour to create a diversion by singing the hymn in an entirely different key. But jealousy does not prevail over vested authority; consequently the hymn, in spite of occasional cacophony, goes on to the last word.

"Another hymn followed, and another; then the leader suggested that 'p'rhaps one of de sisters would like to offer a word of pr'yer.' There was nothing that the sisters would have liked better. Prayer came naturally and fluently from their lips; they embraced the whole world in their supplications, and so vehemently protested their belief that what they asked for would be granted, that they led at least one of their listeners to suspect that they had serious misgivings on that score.

"The singing and praying had been going on from about ten o'clock, and now it was nearly one. I began to hear murmurs. I detected a note of discontent. One man, in a loud whisper, expressed the opinion that though spiritual food was admirable, something more material was required if one

was competently to go through with the business of the night. Another guest remarked to a relative of the deceased. 'See here, I come to sing for y'u to-night, an' look how y'u treat me!' The tone was reproachful, the suggestion being that reward sweetens labour, and that the man who sings ought to be strengthened with food and drink for the singing.

"Suddenly I heard a shout—'Fry fish and bread advance!' It came from one of the guests who had so far forgotten personal dignity in his hunger that he had undertaken to solicit refreshments publicly and without shame. The appeal was not ignored. The hymn-book fell from the leader's hands, and a movement on the outskirts of the crowd caused every one to glance with a look of expectancy in that direction. Satisfaction was visibly expressed on the faces of most of the people when three or four women were seen approaching with trays, for every one then realized that the religious part of the 'ninth-night' was at an end, and that the time for feasting and speech-making and rejoicing had come."

After describing this more jovial part of the function, Mr. De Lisser concludes: "Tales were told, games played, wrestling matches between adventurous youths and ardent damsels take place.

The 'ninth-night' becomes a picnic under the morning stars. More refreshments are handed round, the laughter is now as loud as the singing was before. Clearly the period of mourning is over.

"And then the skies begin to lighten and the shrill crowing of a thousand cocks is heard. The air becomes fresh, and the stars grow pale. And soon it is 'good-bye' and 'good-bye,' and yet again 'good-bye.' All the mourners are going home; most of them will have to be at their work in an hour or two hence. As they depart, I notice that the dead woman's sister goes into the clean unoccupied room, and taking up a covered jar, pours the water it contains into the yard. 'Well,' she remarks, 'we done wid Cecilia now,' and those who hear her heartily agree. Thus good-bye is said to Cecilia also, and the hope is that she will never return to earth to frighten her friends and relatives." [17]

Back to the hills at Refuge, with the waving branches and the pathetic farewell of the children of the "bush," "Good-bye Marse Marny! Good-bye, Marse Marny! Good-bye, Marse Marny!"

The kindly charity and gentle patience of devoted old John Ferreira had softened many a heart and had brought knowledge of the truth into more than one life, and his influence was not to die with him.

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[17] H. G. De Lisser, 20th. Century Jamaica. Kingston: 1913, p. 120, *seq.*

For it was the influence of the Church made manifest through his simple unaffected piety. The superstitions of the "bush" must gradually give way before such an outspeaking of Christlike spirit, and grace in time must triumph, when the light of faith illumines even the darkest mind and those who now feel the yearning for something this world can never give, and pathetically assure the missionary: "Fadder, please, me follow, but me no jine your Church yet," will find the strength to break the trammels of sin and superstition and find their peace of soul in the sublime mysteries of faith.

Then will the funeral in the "bush" cast off the shackles of centuries of slavery and degradation. The weird chant will yield to holy psalmody. The grotesque effort to constrain shadow or the duppy will be forever thrown aside, for at the entrance to the church, will each one hear the priest of God proclaim: "Come to his assistance, ye Saints of God! Meet him, ye Angels of the Lord. Receive his soul, and present it to the Most High. May Christ who called thee, receive thee; and may the Angels lead thee into the bosom of Abraham. Eternal rest grant to him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him." [18]

Then after the inspiring service of the Ritual

[18] Roman Ritual, Burial Service.

has been finished, on the way to the grave, there will be no wild barbaric tomfoolery of wrestling with the coffin to earn the price of rum. For all will be pondering on the words the Church is speaking through her Minister: "May the Angels lead thee into Paradise; may the Martyrs receive thee at thy coming, and take thee to Jerusalem the Holy City. May the choirs of Angels receive thee, and mayst thou, with the once poor Lazarus, have rest everlasting." [19]

Then, too, there can be no question of a 'ninth-night,' with its degrading orgy, when once the final prayer has been pronounced over the bystanders at the grave: "Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that whilst we lament the departure of our brother, Thy servant, out of this life, we may bear in mind that we are most certainly to follow him. Give us grace to make ready for that last hour by a devout and holy life, and protect us against a sudden and unprovided death. Teach us how to watch and pray that, when Thy summons comes, we may go forth to meet the Bridegroom and enter with Him into life everlasting. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." [20]

May good Marse Marney gaze down with pity on his dear children of the "bush," and may his

[19] Roman Ritual, Burial Service. [20] *Ibid.*

intercession hasten the realization of their hour of enlightenment and salvation!

And as the missionary lays his pen aside, his head once more bows low, and with earnest heart he breathes the prayer, which on each recurring Good Friday precedes the Adoration of the Cross: "Almighty, eternal God, Who dost ever seek, not the death of sinners, but their life, favorably receive our prayer, and deliver these from the worship of idols, and gather them unto Thy holy Church, to the praise and glory of Thy name. Amen." [21]

[21] Roman Missal, Good Friday.

THE END

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